

*Frashers Photos, Pomona, California. Courtesy Death Valley Hotel Company.*

Golden Canyon looks down across its vast alluvial fan to the floor of Death Valley, and beyond to the Panamints, with snow-capped Telescope Peak dim in the distance. This narrow canyon mouth is typical of many opening into Death Valley.

**H E R E ' S**

**D E A T H**

**V A L L E Y**

*by*

**C. B. GLASSCOCK**

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*To*  
*The Memory*

OF THE BELOVED PADRE OF THE DESERT

THE VERY REVEREND MONSIGNOR

JOHN J. CROWLEY

WHO KNEW AND LOVED AND SERVED DEATH VALLEY

AND ITS PEOPLE OF ALL FAITHS, TO

THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE.



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FOR assistance and information received in the course of research for this narrative history of Death Valley, I acknowledge gratefully my indebtedness to numerous persons and sources of fact, anecdote and characterization.

Miss Caroline Wenzel, in charge of the California Room of the State Library at Sacramento, made available a large number of bound volumes of newspapers extensively indexed under the heading, "Characters; Eccentric," which disclosed most of the publicized activities of Walter Scott ("Death Valley Scotty") from the moment he made his first bid for notoriety in 1904 up to the present.

Albert M. Johnson, who has been Walter Scott's financial backer for a third of a century, was courteous and helpful on a few points, and courteous but reticent on a few others. Walter Bracken, friend of A. M. Johnson since childhood in Ohio, a leading citizen of Las Vegas, Nevada, since he laid out the townsite in 1904, and a close friend of Walter Scott through most of those years, also was helpful. Others who contributed to the picture and record of Walter Scott are Sam and Lee Yount, who told me of working with Scotty in their boyhood at W. T. Coleman & Company's Harmony Borax Works in Death Valley; Alex McLaren, whose one-time associate in mining, Burdon Gaylord, financed Scotty's first famous publicity stunt; Mrs. V. F. del Valle, who was Mrs. Gaylord at that time; Al Myers, Zeb Kendall, and numerous other men of good fame in Tonopah and Goldfield who have known Scotty intimately for many years; Warner Scott, Walter Scott's brother who was shot in the historic "battle of Wingate Pass," and whom I interviewed in his cabin at Reno; W. M. King, clerk of the Harrison County Court, at Cynthiana, Kentucky, where Walter Scott was born of a substantial family; and others too numerous to mention.

Facts and features of the earlier history of Death Valley have been obtained largely from Wm. Lewis Manly's personal record of *Death Valley in '49*, privately published in 1894; the Rev. J. W. Brier's reminiscences of his boyhood experiences with the emigrant parties, published serially in *Out West*, in 1903, and extracts from diaries and other material attributed to the historic Jayhawkers.

There is not a very extensive bibliography of Death Valley material, but books which proved helpful either with facts or suggestions include State Mineralogist Henry G. Hanks' *Third Annual Report*, 1883; John R. Spears' *Death Valley and Other Borax Deposits of the Pacific Coast*, 1892; W. A. Chalfant's *Death Valley: The Facts*; Neill C. Wilson's *Silver Stampede*; Bourke Lee's *Death Valley*, and *Death Valley Men*; Dane Coolidge's *Death Valley Prospectors*; A. L. Kroeber's *Handbook of the Indians of California*; and various government reports such as that of the U. S. and California Boundary Commission in 1861; the so-called Ives Report; the C. Hart Merriam Report, 1891; and Carl I. Wheat's brochure, *Trailing the Forty-Niners Through Death Valley*.

For personal reminiscences dating back nearly three quarters of a century I am indebted to Ed Stiles of San Bernardino, one of the few living men who was familiar with the wild camp of Panamint City in the 'seventies, who was a driver of huge freight teams through the desert while still a boy, and who hooked up and drove the first twenty-mule team ever assembled. Lee Yount's and Sam Yount's familiarity with the Death Valley country goes back almost as far. W. W. Cahill, who has had an active part in the history of Death Valley for forty-seven years, who helped to build the Tonopah & Tidewater Railroad to the valley's eastern gateway, and who is still the railroad's superintendent, contributed fact and anecdote. C. M. Rasor, who was familiar with Death Valley before the construction of the railroad, and who surveyed the line,

granted me a comprehensive interview. Frank Tilton and Johnny Mills, who have wrested a living from the desert for nearly half a century, were generous with their memories. So also were Johnny O'Keefe, veteran twenty-mule driver, Cy Johnson, A. K. Ishmael, and others of the old-timers around Beatty, Nevada.

Ralph J. ("Dad") Fairbanks, eighty-three years old, who has known the entire region intimately for more than forty years, has contributed richly to the scene and to this narrative. His son-in-law Charles Brown, and some of his sons and daughters, grown gray upon the desert, have added to the picture.

Catherine R. Moreau, daughter of John Ryan who was right-hand man of Francis Marion ("Borax") Smith in the practical opening of Death Valley to the world, has contributed generously from her memories of thirty-odd years ago when she worked as her father's secretary during the construction of the railroad and the opening of the great Lila C. borax mine near the eastern portal of the valley.

Arthur Kunze, who founded the briefly spectacular copper camp of Greenwater, has provided data upon that event. The stories of the camps of Skidoo and the comparatively modern but now equally ghostly Leadfield, have been taken largely from their local newspapers published on the scene. Among the mining men who have clung to Death Valley through most of their lifetimes, Pete Auguerreberry and Harold and Henry Ashford, on opposite sides of the valley, have perhaps added more than any others to personal recollections of gold-mining activities within this century.

Of the younger men and women who have known Death Valley only through the last twenty-five years or less, I am especially indebted to Mr. and Mrs. Harry Gower, Mrs. Frank D. Grace, who as Miss Bess V. Davis was the first schoolteacher at Death Valley Junction, Mr. and Mrs. W. H.

Brown, Miss Katherine Ronan, and the Very Rev. Msgr. John J. Crowley, beloved padre of the desert, whose untimely death while driving to Death Valley for the celebration of the Mass was sadly broadcast throughout the nation on March 17, 1940. Father Crowley's parish extended from the Peak of Mt. Whitney to and through the pit of Death Valley and beyond to the California-Nevada line, from the highest to the lowest spots in the United States, an area of approximately 10,000 square miles. Throughout that area he traveled a thousand miles each week in the work of his church, of mercy, of charity, and of practical friendship among all peoples of all faiths. He was personally acquainted with the great majority of residents of his vast parish, and was loved, respected and boundlessly admired by all. A truly great man!

And for the latest disclosures of Death Valley history, through the few years since it has been a National Monument under the direction of the National Park Service, Superintendent Ray Goodwin and Geologist Donald Curry are to be thanked most warmly.

C. B. GLASSCOCK

Laguna Beach, California  
1940

HERE'S DEATH VALLEY





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## CHAPTER I

---

### THE NAMING OF DEATH VALLEY

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SEATED in the sun, his back against a wall, his leathern face alight, Indian George gazed back through ninety years to the one great event of his childhood.

"Yes," he said, "me and my papa, we see. We live Panamint side. What you call Emigrant Spring. We go up on hill. Long time ago. I'm little boy."

He held out a gnarled hand, blotched and blackened by a hundred years of Death Valley and Panamint sun. The palm was perhaps three feet from the ground.

"I'm little boy. You savvy. Mebbe ten year old. Injun boy ten year old little. No get much eat. My papa stop. I see three men down canyon. I point. I say, 'Papa, what those?' I scared. Those men all long hair down front." He gestured to indicate untrimmed beards. "I no see nothing like that before. I start run. My papa, he grab. Say, 'No run. They see run, they shoot.' He hold me down. Hide. Those men go on. No see us."

He paused, took a last long drag at his cigarette, held it so that I could see it was down to its last half-inch, and regretfully heeled it into the dirt. When another cigarette was burning he looked at me with filmed old eyes.

"How long time ago that?" he demanded abruptly.

"Mebbe so ninety years," I said.

He nodded with satisfaction. Evidently my estimate of the time agreed with others he had heard. It confirmed the opinion of his importance that he has acquired since he became known to a few zealous students of western history as the one living human being who actually saw the advance guard of the first recorded party of white men ever to encounter Death Valley.

"I'm plenty old man," he said proudly, after a pause. "Long time, I remember."

He settled back comfortably. The utter quiet of a windless day upon the desert, with neither sound nor movement, closed upon us. I handed over cigarettes and matches, and waited. After a time there came forth other memories. They were memories which illuminate the history of ninety desert years. Some were slow years through which Death Valley itself waited, less concerned than its stolid native Indians, for the movements of the white men.

Indian George has no doubt about what he saw. He has even helped to correct an error of many years standing as to the precise route taken by the historic Jayhawker party in their escape from what the Indians through centuries had called Tomesha, meaning ground afire. That has earned George some honors and many cigarettes. But one frightened little Indian boy could never have suspected all the tragedy, heroism and accomplishment centering in the valley of ground afire on that December day in 1849.

The three hairy men whom he saw were a detachment of the Jayhawkers who had burned their wagons to smoke the meat of their starved oxen on the valley crossing a few miles north of what is now known as Furnace Creek Ranch. George and his papa were plenty scared. After they had watched the hairy men disappear into a rocky canyon they took to the hills and saw no more. Tomesha was to burn through ten more summers before the boy encountered his next group of

hairy men. He found that adventure so pleasing that he took for himself the name of their leader.

All that was just as well. Possibly the undernourished little Indian boy might have been frightened literally to death if he had seen the scores of other hairy men, their women, their children, their great horned beasts and covered wagons moving in the depths of Tomesha. For there were more white men in the region in that Christmas week of 1849 than there were to be through the next quarter of a century, and they were the first ever to be seen by the local Indians.

To the whites, Death Valley was merely another and more terrible hazard than any they had encountered on a wandering, unmapped desert journey of eighty days southwestward from the recently established Mormon settlement of Salt Lake City. It was too vast to visualize in its entirety from any point they had yet climbed. It was a pit 130 miles long, shaped, and colored in spots somewhat like a Gila monster, stretching near the southeast slanting line of what was later to be defined as the California border.

Nearly half of that great pit lay below sea level. The emigrants, approaching through a narrow canyon near the center of its eastern wall, could see only that its lower surfaces, almost flat, were streaked and smeared as if by a colossal white-wash brush, carelessly wielded. The mountain barriers which formed its sides towered a mile above the depths, and changed from deep blue in the shades of dawn and sunset to brilliant yellows and dull reds, slashed with dark shadows, in the gleaming sunlight. From the feet of the mountain walls, at the narrow mouth of each barren canyon, alluvial deposits, a mile and more wide and long, laid their slate-blue fans down to the soiled white expanses below the level of the sea.

At dawn and sunset the fires of heaven—or hell—mantled the mountains and sometimes spread across the entire dome of the sky. Exhausted by the hardships of their long journey

from the rendezvous near Salt Lake City, the travelers knew only that they must cross the barren sink before them and climb the forbidding heights beyond, with more ranges, visible, snow-capped, still farther to the westward. The gold-laden streams above the fertile valleys of California had been their goal for almost a year. The bitter waters in the sink below threatened to be their reward.

But they were men and women of the stock that had been conquering the frontiers of America for more than two hundred years. Their wagon train from Salt Lake City had been broken by disagreements as to routes and policies. Their only remaining ties were personal, family and group loyalties, and an unyielding will to reach their goal.

Largest of the groups was that known as the Jayhawkers—thirty-six young men who had set out from Galesburg, Illinois, ten months earlier. The Rev. James Welch Brier and his valiant wife and three small sons, with a few stragglers, traveled on the trail of the Jayhawkers. Detachments of men from Georgia and Mississippi, numbering about twenty-five, moved under the general direction of James Martin and "Captain" Towne. There were also some twenty men in the Coker party.

Choosing a different route from their point of entrance into the valley proper was the group of two families and their associates that has gone down in history as the Bennett-Arcane party, followed by the Wade family, consisting of father, mother and four children ranging in age from six to fourteen years. A few single men were attached to the Bennett-Arcane group, led by the heroic William Lewis Manly.

Group by group, held within a few days' march of each other not so much by intent as by the slow advance of leaders who sought a passable way, they had crossed the Amargosa, desert of bitterness, and headed downward into the desert of death.

Picture that broken caravan, you who may follow its course today on a smooth oiled road from the Amargosa Hotel down Furnace Creek wash. Pause a moment in your fifty-mile-an-hour flight—just long enough to permit the boulders beside the highway to assume their true significance. They were barriers to the movement of broken-hoofed oxen and lumbering, heaving, straining covered wagons. On either side of you, extending to the high and low rocky walls of this sloping wash, is precisely the sort of roadway down which those hardy Americans journeyed.

Furnace Creek wash has not changed in these years. It has merely been smoothed in a narrow ribbon for the passage of automobiles. One cloudburst, of which it has known scores since the passage of the emigrants, will restore it to precisely the same condition in which they found it. Be happy that you will not have to make the journey then—that you can wait until the CCC boys roll away the boulders, scrape away the gravel, and restore the oiled strip of motor-smooth surface.

The emigrants could not wait. Death waited. They must roll away their own boulders, or hoist their wagons, jarring, over the rocks. And so they did.

First moved the Jayhawkers, young men, once strong, once well-equipped and well-supplied, once singing, fiddling, joking around their campfires. But they were no longer strong, nor well-supplied, nor gay. Life for them had been reduced to its two fundamentals—food and water. Reduced almost to the primitive condition of the naked savages who watched from hiding, they were far less well-equipped with the needed wisdom of the desert.

All felt the imminent danger of death from starvation and thirst. None appreciated how fortunate they were to be entering the ground afire when its flames had been cooled by the ideal weather of the Christmas season. If it had been

the Fourth of July, in the conditions of those days not one could have lived to tell the tale. As it was, the great majority came safely through their ordeal.

The Jayhawkers with their wagons and starving oxen turned northward from the valley's entrance at the mouth of Furnace Creek wash. They camped at a brackish spring which nourished a little coarse grass for their animals, near what later became known as the Salt Creek crossing, near the present east-west road between Daylight Pass and Towne's Pass. The Georgians and Mississippians, arriving in the same neighborhood, had already burned their wagons and packed their few belongings on their oxen. The Jayhawkers decided to do the same thing.

When Manly, scouting ahead of the Bennett-Arcane party, which he had left back in Furnace Creek wash, arrived at the pitiful camp the Jayhawkers were already burning wagons to smoke the stringy meat of a few slaughtered oxen. At a distance which they estimated as fifteen or twenty miles to the westward they could see a depression in the mountain wall which they had named Martin's Pass, but which scouts had told them was impassable for wagons. They advised Manly of that, and went on with their preparations.

From that point, marked for many years by parts of wagons, iron work and discarded ox-yokes, the various groups moved as best they could, westward across the valley, and up the wide alluvial slope upon which Stovepipe Wells Hotel now welcomes travelers. At the top of the gravel fan the parties divided as their judgment suggested.

How harrowing were their experiences, even in the balmy winter of the deep desert valley, may be best revealed in the brief diary records attributed to Asa Haynes, as captain of one of the divisions of the Jayhawkers. Undated day after day he recorded their movements and their hardships in items of not

more than half a dozen words each: "South 12 miles, no water." "Then southeast 8 miles, got weak."

In a single entry of seven words, without mention of the scene or dates, he crowded the whole story of the Jayhawkers' experience in Death Valley. "Left wagons, packed cattle, six days wandering." And those six days brought the Jayhawkers only over the first mountains to the westward, into a maze of other desert ranges and valleys.

In five short entries Haynes has left a suggestion of the following weeks of struggle. A man named Fish died. "Starvation." No detail. No further comment. William Isham died. Luther Richards found water. Two men, Frank and Townshend, wandered away. One man collapsed, and when Haynes returned to him with coffee he was dead. No name is given. William Robinson and McGowan passed the desert only to die "at the foot of mountains." Townshend found dead. "Scalped." And all that after Death Valley itself had been left behind.

It is not a clarifying record but it is as illuminating as the desert sun, as harsh and stark as the Death Valley sink and mountains.

From subsequent research we know that a man named Fish, identified by Haynes as from Iowa, by Manly as from Indiana, and by Carl I. Wheat as from Illinois, died near the summit of the Argus Range, some two weeks' travel from the pit of the valley. We know that William Isham, from Rochester, New York, died on the same day, far to the southward near the bitter Searles Lake. That distance indicates the wide scattering of the emigrants. No record except that of Haynes mentions the finding of Townshend "scalped," and Townshend has never been adequately identified under that name. There has been no identification of the man whom Haynes mentions as having died while Haynes had gone to fetch him



coffee. William Robinson died four weeks' distance from Death Valley. McGowan's death or identity have never been established. Captain Culverwell alone died in the valley.

Possibly a few were lost and never identified. Indians eventually reported finding the body of a white man in the mountains to the west with a broken leg and a bullet hole in his forehead. It suggests a mercy killing by friends who could do nothing better to save him from death by thirst and starvation. Manly's record, written many years after the events, mentions a "Dale" family, but Carl I. Wheat, who has compiled the most comprehensive census of the emigrants to date, believes that that was either a misprint or an error in memory.

For nearly ninety years the route of the Jayhawkers from the valley proper was commonly believed to be through what has long been known as Emigrant Canyon. Only in 1936 did Farland Wells and Rocky Cochran of the Death Valley CCC camp, with an Indian, Tom Wilson, born in the vicinity, find a boulder in a smaller canyon a short distance west of Emigrant, bearing convincing evidence that the Jayhawkers passed that way.

Inscribed on the rock were names, initials and dates. Some were almost obliterated by the action of the elements. "W B R, 1849" may have been the inscription of W. B. Roods, listed in the original Jayhawker party. A faint "lar" may have been the imprint of Andrew Larken, the only Jayhawker with that syllable in his name. Brier may have found strength to scratch his name, of which only the "rier" can be deciphered. A few later dates and names are comparatively clear. "J. Hitchens 1860 Boston" is known to have been a member of Dr. Darwin French's prospecting and exploration party of that year. "Frank L. Weston 1861" appears. "T. G. Beasley" added no date to his inscription, but is known to have been a member of the French party.

The inscriptions and the date of 1849 are conclusive evidence that some of the emigrants passed that way instead of the slightly easier route that came to be known as Emigrant Canyon. Further verification has been obtained from Indian George, who saw them. Diplomatically put on the grill by T. Ray Goodwin, superintendent of Death Valley National Monument, who likes to have everything under his direction well defined, George admitted that the three hairy men whom he saw as a boy did not go up Emigrant Canyon.

"Why you always say they go that way, George?"

George grinned. "White man always say that way," he said. "I lettum go."

"But you saw them go next canyon west." It was not a question. Goodwin was bearing down in the interest of accuracy.

"Yes," said George. "Next canyon they go."

George is always willing to oblige his white friends. So Superintendent Goodwin has named the next canyon Jayhawker Canyon. My friend Carl I. Wheat, who happily chronicles painstaking corrections of long-established errors for the California Historical Society Quarterly, has accepted and approved this finding. He has also, with the assistance of Mr. Goodwin and Donald Curry in the field, made numerous corrections of the precise routes taken by the scattered emigrants before and after they entered Death Valley, and has published a brochure which is the last word on the subject.

If that inscribed rock had not been found, or Indian George had not been so accommodating, everything would be much simpler. Tourists could drive on an excellent road, as they do drive, up Emigrant Canyon, and picture the emigrants stumbling, struggling, over that identical boulderstrewn terrain. And now they will have to walk up the neighboring Jayhawker Canyon, or the Park Service will have to build another road.

Perhaps, to obtain a more accurate idea of what those emigrants encountered, they had better walk. They should go on a diet of starved beef, rice, unleavened bread and tea or coffee made with alkaline water, for several weeks of training. They should drive ahead of them the hide-covered skeleton of a steer carrying the pitiful remnants of their food, and to serve as lunch when the other food is exhausted. To make it quite realistic they might even carry a nine-year-old boy, wasted to the weight of a three-year-old, as Mrs. Brier did.

It may be safer for them to drive the Emigrant Canyon route. Possibly some of the emigrants went that way. The whole assembly at Salt Creek had broken up with the final abandonment of the wagons. They turned aside or moved ahead as strength, judgment, or desperation dictated.

Two divisions of the Jayhawkers, led by Edward Doty and Asa Haynes, with the Brier family and others following, catching up, falling behind and catching up again, eventually found their way across the Mojave desert to the fertile San Francisquito Ranch, near what is now Newhall. The hospitality of the *haciendados* awaited them—water, food, rest, life, and the beginning of fame. The date was February 4, 1850. Forty days from Death Valley. To them it must have been like the forty years of the Israelites. I drove from the valley to Newhall on February 26, 1939, in six hours, and stopped for an hour to hear from Indian George how he had seen them go by.

"How long time ago, that?"

"Ninety years."

Ninety years, and Death Valley is unchanged. Only the man-made threads of road upon its ruggedness have opened the way to its wonders, beauties, and history.

If you doubt, try camping for a month where the Bennett-Arcane party camped for a month in that winter of 1849-50, while the occasional companions of the eighty days preceding

the ordeal struggled out upon various routes. But remember, to get the true effect you should limit your accommodations to the old-fashioned covered wagons, not the modern trailer. You should limit your food to emaciated ox-meat, and flour—not much flour—and a spoonful of rice a day. You should forget that there are roads and maps. You should see only the waiting carrion ravens.

Seeing the valley from the spot where Mrs. Bennett and Mrs. Arcane crouched in the meager shade of their wagons, helplessly watching their little ones sink nearer and nearer to death from starvation and illness through days and weeks of waiting, one can understand how little it has changed.

Seeing it from the mile-high point of Dante's View a few miles to the eastward, a mile straight up from the lowest spot of land upon this continent, one can understand how little it has changed. Only a tiny man-made thread of road here and there upon its unearthly beauty emphasizes the fact that man may come and go, but Death Valley waits, inviolable.

The Bennett-Arcane party knew only that man might come. In agony and terror they doubted that man, once in the clutches of Death Valley, could ever go.

Before his conference with the Jayhawkers at the Salt Creek crossing where he found them burning their wagons, Manly had scouted down Furnace Creek wash ahead of the Bennett-Arcane party and had seen an Indian silhouetted upon a distant butte, "so far away he looked no taller than my finger." And he saw far more than that. His book of memoirs, published half a century after the events, remains the most coherent, complete and readable record of those incredible experiences.

He records that it was Christmas Day, 1849. He was made aware of the date when he found the Brier family encamped beside some feeble springs far down the wash which was their route into the valley. The Rev. James Welch Brier was cele-

brating the occasion by giving a lecture. More than fifty years later, his son, the Rev. John Wells Brier, in memoirs published in *Out West*, thus described that celebration:

"The best we could do for Christmas was to slaughter an ox free for all. The men wanted something to remind them of other days, and my father gave a lecture on education. It was grave, humorous and reminiscent."

Manly mentions no one at that camp except the Briers. There may or may not have been stragglers from other groups.

After watching the Briers away from the Furnace Creek encampment the next morning, the scout returned to his own party and guided their footsore oxen and lumbering wagons down the last eight boulder-strewn miles of the wash. On the following day he scouted the floor of the valley. A minor shock of that day was his discovery of a mummy-like Indian hidden in the sand hills beyond the mouth of the canyon.

"He was not dead for I could see him move as he breathed, but his skin looked very much like a well-dried venison ham." A greater shock was the discovery that the valley to the southward appeared to be paved with practically impassable blocks and pinnacles of rock salt.

"After this discovery I took my way back to the road made by the Jayhawkers and found it quite level, but sandy. Following this I came to a campfire soon after dark at which E. Doty and mess were camped. . . . I inquired of them about Martin's Pass, as they were now quite near it. They said it was no pass at all. No wagon could get over it. . . . Before daylight I was headed back on the trail."

Returning to his own company, Manly met two companions of the long journey whom he identifies as "oldish men, perhaps fifty years old, one a Mr. Fish of Indiana and another named Gould." Fifty was old indeed for such undertakings. The great majority of gold-rush emigrants were under thirty.

Manly left his acquaintances with the feeling that he would never see them again. He never did—alive.

Joining his people at the Furnace Creek encampment, he advised them that the Jayhawkers and others in advance, had burned their wagons to smoke their ox-meat for an attempted escape through the mountains to the northwest. The company agreed to try a southwesterly route, and Manly led them across the valley, probably on the approximate line of the corduroy road which was built many years later to give safe and dry access from Furnace Creek Ranch to the Panamint Mountains. He remembered half a century later that they crossed through shallow water, while he waded ahead, prodding with a mesquite stick to make sure of depth and solidity of the bottom.

They attempted a climb up one of the precipitous Panamint canyons and found it hopeless. On the second night they found fresh water with a little overflow nourishing enough coarse grass to keep their oxen alive.

Precisely where that point may have been is now also a question in dispute. For decades it was accepted as being the harsh oasis of mesquite and salt grass known as Bennett's Well. More recently some students of history have placed it a few miles farther north, at a spot known as Tule Spring, or somewhere between the two, where thirty years later the Eagle Borax Works flourished briefly. The fact that Manly's memoirs refer to the wagons as the only shade available cast the chief doubt upon the Bennett's Well location. A wide thicket of mesquite trees, certainly more than a hundred years old, provides sparse natural shade in that area.

The point of immediate importance to the travelers was that there was enough potable water for their requirements and enough feed to keep their oxen alive. On the first day in that camp, four men who had made the long journey as ox-drivers and helpers with Bennett and Arcane refused to re-

main. Each of the four packed ten days' provisions on his back and moved northward to find the trail of the Jayhawkers.

The Bennetts and Arcanes, with the two little Bennett girls, Melissa and Martha, the Bennett boy, George, and little Charley Arcane, settled into camp. Half the night they debated, and at last decided that Manly and John Rogers should go out on foot to find a route, and return with help. Another ox was killed, and the meat dried to supply the scouts. Later Manly wrote that some idea of the emaciated condition of their cattle could be obtained from the fact that seven-eighths of all the flesh of that ox was carried away in the two men's knapsacks.

With their dried meat, two spoonfuls of rice and tea, a small tin cup and a quart tin kettle and sheath knife each; with a shotgun and rifle, half a blanket, and thirty-odd dollars between them, the two men moved out upon their journey. Heavier than their physical burdens were their spirits, and their responsibility.

I shall not attempt to tell in detail the story of that journey. William Lewis Manly himself has written it, in all its harrowing and heroic features. Beside his unadorned tale any other must fade into insignificance.

Bennett expected them to be gone ten days. Manly believed they would require fifteen. They did, in fact, consume twenty-six. Climbing, plodding, thirsting, they blundered upon the trail of the Jayhawkers. They found the body of Fish, unburied. They came by night to the campfire of the Jayhawker group captained by Doty. They heard of the death of Isham, and that the Brier family was somewhere behind and the Haynes detachment somewhere ahead.

Struggling onward the next day they caught up with the Haynes party. They found and fed the Bennett-Arcane teamsters who were waiting like scavengers for scraps from a

slaughtered ox of which even the intestines were prized as food. Leaving that camp at daybreak they broke a new trail southward, carrying with them the names and addresses of eastern families to be notified if the men behind them trudged to death instead of life. On and on, mountain and desert, starvation and thirst.

At last, a day of days, the first game encountered for weeks, a crow, a hawk and a quail fell before their guns. A mountain brook completed their happiness, and restored their strength. Another day and Heaven itself opened before them—a grassy, tree-studded valley, with a grazing yearling steer within rifle shot. It fell, and they pounced upon it with the hunger of wolves.

Another day, and they were in the settlements. Another, at San Fernando Mission. Two or three more, and with a little one-eyed mule packed with beans, flour and other provisions, and a horse each to ride, they turned their backs once more upon life, and headed toward Death Valley.

Would they be in time? Would their starving friends, the ailing children, have waited so many days beyond the time set for their return. If they had not waited, as seemed probable, the scouts were undertaking another month of tortuous, useless travel. But they put that thought aside and hurried out again across the desert.

But the horses could not survive one half the journey that the two men had made on foot. Exhausted, they could no longer climb. Weeping in their own weakness and disappointment, the men abandoned them. Heart-wrenching whinnies followed the men, clambering up a canyon.

And so, in time, with only the little mule and its pitiful supply of provisions, and their own hard-won knowledge of routes and far-spaced water holes to show for their weeks of torture, Manly and Rogers came again down the steep slope of a Panamint canyon toward the camp of their friends.



Rogers, in advance, halted abruptly. Stretched upon the ground, face upward, lay the body of a white man. It was Captain Culverwell whom they had last seen weeks ago on the morning of their departure from the encampment. One strayed from camp. One dead. How many more might they find, or never find?

Cautiously now they moved onward. Not a sound, not a movement welcomed them. Four wagons in the distance where they had left seven, and the four had been stripped of their coverings. They knew a sudden stunning fear that the friends for whom they had been risking their lives had been massacred by raiding Indians. The Indians might still be there, in ambush, waiting to kill the only two white men who had ever returned to Tomesha after having once escaped.

Within rifle shot, beyond arrow shot, they consulted. Seven charges in Manly's rifle, two in Rogers' shotgun. One shot from the rifle would still leave a total of eight with which to repulse the Indians if the alarm brought them from hiding. Manly fired.

Out from beneath a distant wagon crawled a man. He came painfully to his feet and looked around. A white man!

Even today, ninety-one years later, speeding smoothly by, or stopping, in the luxury of our cars, beside the scene of that drama, we must feel its soul-shaking force.

Remember; two mothers, two fathers, four sick and starving children, had waited amid that desolation for twenty-six agonizing days for this moment. And here it was. Black despair ended with the abruptness of that rifle shot. Here, suddenly, in the hands of two loyal men, freely offered, were the gifts of life. In an instant all the terrors of an unknown future fled before this great new hope.

Four adults and four children only were left to profit by that moment. The other groups, of the Wade family and the single men, had lacked the faith of the Bennett-Arcane party

in the loyalty and stamina of Manly and Rogers. Within a week after the scouts' departure, the others had started to move away, some dragging their wagons with them, some abandoning the wagons and carrying meager packs upon their weakened oxen. The last of them had gone two weeks before the return of Manly and Rogers, seeking any route which might appear in the wilderness. They preferred to die in a struggle for life rather than in an idle waiting for death.

How many of those desperate wayfarers survived is not definitely recorded. But eighty-nine years later two elderly women ascended the broad stone terraces of Furnace Creek Inn, and stood and gazed silently for a long time, away to the south. Perhaps it was the strain of trying to distinguish the small dark blot of the Bennett's Well mesquite thicket in the long expanse of whiteness that made them press their handkerchiefs to their eyes.

Later, within the luxury of the Inn, they told of the hardships of a little girl of nine, encamped at that dim spot upon Death Valley's floor to the southward, eighty-nine years earlier. That little girl was Almira Wade. Almira Wade was their mother. They were Mrs. John Quincy White of Ukiah and Mrs. J. A. Hunter of Santa Clara. The Death Valley known to its first white travelers was very real to those white-haired women. They had heard about it from a mother who had known it all too well.

They had heard about it from William Lewis Manly, in repeated conferences with their mother, Mrs. Ortle, at their home in Alviso. There Manly frequently arrived from his own home in Santa Clara to discuss details while he was writing his memoirs for publication in 1894. They were able to state with authority that the Wade family, father, mother, and three children had found their own way out to life while the Bennetts and Arcanes waited for the return of Manly and Rogers.

Why Manly omitted that important detail from his book will remain a mystery. That he was under some obligations to Almira Wade Ortley for contributory recollections about the emigrants' experiences is beyond doubt. Almira Wade's daughters remember twitting their widowed mother about her white-bearded boy friend from Santa Clara.

At the moment, in Death Valley, the first blinding light of hope, which had brought the women in tears to their knees, and left the men speechless, faded a little before Manly's practical information. There were 250 miles of barren desert and mountain still between them and safety.

But those were women and men of stamina seldom equaled in the modern generation of dependence upon formulas of relief. Daylight found them cutting and sewing the stout canvas of their wagon covers into pack harness for their oxen. Two hickory shirts with tails sewed together and necks tied, flung over the back of an ox, could carry the two smallest children, while the two others rode astride. Each of the women could mount an ox, and do the best she could. The little mule, for best insurance, could carry the new provisions. Other oxen could carry what their strength permitted, and be available for butchering when necessary.

And so they did. It is not necessary to repeat all the harrowing details of that journey. The point is that they made it, in spite of hell and high mountains. The children screamed with illness and pain, or moaned with weariness and thirst. The mothers, helpless to give relief or comfort, tottered into whatever camps Manly could arrange in advance. In camp they collapsed upon the blankets laid out for them, to eat a soup of stringy ox-meat if providence gave them a camp beside water. They lay in a coma of exhaustion until daylight drove them on. The men did what they could. Day after day, day after day, week after weary week, they staggered on.

And, by God! they made it!

Every man, woman and child of that pitiful party, four oxen remaining, the dog Cuff, and the little one-eyed mule came, thanking God, into the paradise of San Francisquito rancho.

On the crest of the Panamints, looking back and down into the pit where they had waited, despairing, for the return of Manly and Rogers, they had spoken a heartfelt farewell.

“Good-by, Death Valley!”

Tomesha had been rechristened, with tears and blood.

Death Valley waited for the years and the men to come.

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## CHAPTER II

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### IT ISN'T THE HUMIDITY; IT'S THE HEAT

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The escape of the 'Forty-Niners from Death Valley advertised the area to a very limited public.

The Spanish-speaking ranchers of San Francisquito and the San Fernando valley, shocked by their plight, moved to pity by their tale, made them welcome. Fat yearling steers were butchered for their feasting. Beans and cornmeal, milk, vegetables and fruit were provided. Some made their way to El Pueblo de Neustra Senora La Reina de Los Angeles. Quickly the good food, the sense of safety, the comfort of abundant life around them, restored their strength, their hope and ambition. By various routes and means most of them traveled into the towns and gold fields of northern California.

The Jayhawker, the Bennett-Arcane, the Brier, and the so-called Martin-Towne or Georgian and Mississippian group survivors wrote their stories home to their families or friends, and concentrated upon the task of earning a living. Few wished ever again to visit Death Valley.

But Death Valley had played a grim trick, a trick quite in keeping with its character. In the hands of one of those emigrants it had placed a tenuous clew to lure men back and back again into its clutches. The snare was only a bit of virgin silver wire, some few inches in length, but long enough and strong enough to lead perhaps a thousand men over hundreds

of miles of barren mountains and desert through half a century into the maw of Death Valley.

Someone among the emigrants had broken the sight from his gun. Seeking to retrieve it from a crevice, he dug out, not the missing gunsight, but a bit of malleable wire which he managed to twist and hammer around the muzzle in such manner as to serve as a temporary sight. Later, in a California settlement, taking the gun to have a permanent sight affixed, he learned that the wire was virgin silver. That is one tale. Others are similar. One states that a man named Townsend (sic) pocketed a bit of metallic ore somewhere on the route of escape, and later carried it to a gunsmith to have it made into a sight for his gun.

The greatest doubt is thrown on that story by a faded line in Captain Asa Haynes' journal. It states that Townshend (sic) was found scalped on the trail. Still another story has put the scrap of silver in the hands of Towne, for whom Towne's Pass eventually was named. Any one of those stories would account for the naming of the Lost Gunsight Mine, or Gunsight Lode or Lead, as it was variously called. Any one of them would place it on the western side of Death Valley, probably in the Panamints.

More definite and circumstantial than any of the others is the tale and accompanying tangible evidence attributed to a man named McCormick, who exhibited bits of virgin silver wire to various gold diggers on California's Mother Lode. That is well attested. The only defect in that story is that he said nothing about a gunsight, and he placed the discovery in the eastern instead of the western side of Death Valley, near the border of the Amargosa Desert, perhaps in the Funeral Mountains.

There is unimpeachable testimony that McCormick carried the silver into the gold diggings. P. A. Chalfant, himself a 'Forty-Niner, in an article published twenty-two years after

the event, states that he saw the specimens, and talked with their owner and discoverer, whom he identifies as Dr. McCormick, an old friend and former fellow townsman. McCormick told Chalfant that there was a whole mountain seamed and ribbed and streaked with such silver.

Doubtless the associates whom McCormick mentioned to young Chalfant in 1850 had taken similar specimens of the native silver. Possibly one of them had converted the metal into a gunsight. Probably they exhibited their evidence as freely as did McCormick. But at the moment, with free gold awaiting pick and pan in almost every stream bed and crevice of the western slope of the Sierra, a tale of a mountain of silver aroused comparatively little excitement.

But Towne and Turner, both members of the Death Valley party of 1849, mustered up courage enough to brave the desert's hardships in a search for the Gunsight in 1850. They found nothing but more hardships. In the same year Dr. E. Darwin French, who had talked with Manly, headed an equally unsuccessful expedition, concerning which little is known. After that, Death Valley was largely ignored if not forgotten for a decade, although a few migrant Mormons may have entered it on their way from Salt Lake City to San Bernardino, and an engineer named Washington probably advanced half way up the valley in the course of his survey of the San Bernardino meridian.

But the story of the mountain of silver spread and grew. Death Valley had thrown its lure into the gold camps. It could wait. In the decade some hundreds of thousands of searchers pretty well looted the free gold of the Sierra streams and pockets. No longer could a man take a pan and wash the pure gold from sand and gravel. Mining became more than a one-man job. It demanded more than a pick and shovel, a strong back and a weak head. It required machinery, and organization, and skilled direction, and capital.

There was a definite slump in the gold-gathering business of California in the late 'fifties. Many of the 'Forty-Niners journeyed back to their eastern or mid-western homes. Manly went back, and returned again to California. Others settled to whatever work might provide a living.

Manly encountered his friend John Rogers of the Death Valley days on a Sacramento river boat, and saw him for the last time when their ways separated at Benecia. From Rogers he learned that the Bennett family lived at Watsonville and the Arcanes at Santa Cruz. He visited each and found them well established. The Brier family had settled at Lodi. The Wades were in the Santa Clara Valley. The Jayhawkers were scattered from San Francisco to Galesburg, Illinois, the point of their original organization.

California's population had expanded in ten years from a few thousand native Indians and Mexican peons, some scores of Spanish *haciendados*, and a few hundred American adventurers and settlers, to scores of thousands of American citizens. They were still a long and weary journey, across half the continent, from what they looked upon as the United States.

A group of hard-bitten wayfarers discovered silver ore upon the slope of Mount Davidson, called Sun Peak by the Paiutes, twenty miles east of the California border, 250 miles northwest of Death Valley, in what was then the Mormon territory of Utah. California, built upon mines, conditioned to mining excitements, responded to a new vision. With gold in abeyance, silver would serve its needs.

The Comstock Lode, Virginia City, the State of Nevada, and the most concentrated mining boom the West had yet known, were the prompt results. Gold-conscious for all the years of its life as a State, California suddenly became silver-conscious.

But this is not a story of the Comstock, or the big bonanza. The point of interest here is that silver suddenly and effec-



tively supplanted gold as a motivating force among mine-conscious Californians.

Death Valley's lure, thrown out ten years earlier in the form of bits of native silver wire, suddenly impressed itself upon miners and other residents of Butte and Yuba and Nevada counties, where the evidence had been exhibited. Talk of the new-found silver of the Comstock Lode turned easily to talk of the lost Gunsight Lode. Talk led to action.

The first rush to the Comstock had started in the late fall of 1859. By early spring of 1860, nearly every man in California had heard of it. So Dr. Darwin French had little trouble in organizing a party in Oroville to locate the Gunsight Lode and give the Comstock a run for its silver. The party included M. H. Farley, J. H. Lillard, W. R. Finch, Robert Bailey, James Hitchens, J. M. Weston, Jacob Nash, William McIntyre and Dr. W. C. Waldron, under the leadership of Dr. French. Dennis Searles and W. B. Lilley have also been listed as members.

They were all strong men. How much they thought they knew of the Gunsight Lode is indicated by the fact that they undertook a journey of some five hundred miles with mules and horses to find it. How little they knew is indicated by the fact that they reached the area of their search at a time of year when even the sun-dried Indians fled the ground afire.

Emigrant reports of the Gunsight had all been based upon winter travel, when the Death Valley region is most comfortable. Dr. Darwin French and his party learned about a Death Valley summer in 1860. They learned more than they had bargained for. They discovered that the Gunsight might be any place within an area 100 miles square, and more than two miles almost straight up and down, from snow in northern crevices of its highest peak to a heat of 135 degrees in the shade of a slab of rock salt on the floor of Death Valley, below sea level.

The men were well equipped, and very very hopeful. Of course their progress, regulated to the pace of pack mules, was somewhat slow down the Sacramento and San Joaquin valleys, but there was plenty of feed and water, and they enjoyed it. Happily they turned eastward from the San Joaquin Valley toward Walker Pass, down which, they had been told, came the emigrants who carried tangible evidence of the Gunsight Lode. It seemed very simple and quite pleasant, although the pass in 1860 did not boast the smooth surfaced highway which it provides today. Indeed, there was hardly a trail, but horses and mules and men could climb it, and did.

Beyond the pass they moved into the Coso Range. Coso is Indian talk for fire. In spots there the earth is literally a seething cauldron. Wider areas are a wilderness of volcanic rock. In June the whole range began to justify its reputation. But the Darwin French party had the courage of its convictions. It also had the courage of ignorance.

Water was scarce, but they found a little, and managed to move on. Feed was scarce, but their mules were hardened to their work by this time, and they got along. In the northerly reaches of the Argus Range they stopped abruptly with the realization that there was something in the air besides the vast and all-pervading heat and silence that they had known for days. The sound of running, falling water. A blessed sound.

Eagerly the mules and the men scrambled onward. And there at their feet, issuing mysteriously from the wall of the sun-baked wash was living water. Incredible but real. Water to drink, water to bathe in, water to listen to, water to nourish enough forage for their animals. A short distance down the sandy wash, flowing beneath the shade of willows, it twisted between two rocky walls, leaped to a lower level and vanished.

The wayfarers camped in delight. They gained new strength and courage. It was not so hot after all. Not when

they stretched themselves in those limpid pools. Only June near the edge of Panamint Valley. It couldn't be far to the Gunsight now. They had already traveled more than four hundred miles.

Only a few miles down the precipitous wash and through the narrow valley below, and there should be the pass which their instructions said had been negotiated by Towne and his fellow gunsighters. Somewhere within view of that pass would be the mountain of silver.

They named the cataracts Darwin Falls, and journeyed on, refreshed. The falls are still there, available on a gravelly detour from the modern Towne's Pass highway. Its contrast to the surrounding desert is as beautiful as it is astonishing. But the upper, more spectacular, falls are difficult of access. One of Father Crowley's latest, and unfinished, projects was to make that short and spectacular stream among barren peaks into a state or county park, and improve the way of access.

The silver mountain must be somewhere in the neighborhood too. At least no man has ever removed it. The Darwin French party found the pass, and named it for Towne. But somehow they missed the Gunsight. Instead they discovered a Death Valley summer.

But those were hardy men, still well equipped, unhampered by responsibilities to women and children, and with some vague knowledge of the terrain. They had heard, more or less directly, the various stories of Towne, of the Jayhawkers, of the Bennett-Arcane party, of the Briers. They knew that across the valley in the mouth of some canyon was a brief flow of water nourishing a little coarse feed for their mules. They knew that on the near side, southward, was more water and enough forage to have maintained the Bennett-Arcane party for a month.

Maybe they had been a little wrong about the silver mountain. Maybe it lay among those farther mountains,

across the valley. The mountains were blue in the dawn, but streaked and scarred with so many other colors and shades as the sun moved westward that one might be silver. Over there was where McCormick's report had placed it, though he had said nothing about a gunsight. They would just step across and see.

But stepping across Death Valley in July is considerably more difficult than stepping across it in December. The Darwin French party had lost all interest in a silver mountain by the time they came to the springs in Furnace Creek wash.

They found the water, and threw themselves into it, soaking and drinking. They had thought they were glad to find the cold waters they had named Darwin Falls. Now they knew truly what it was to be glad.

After a time they realized that the water was warm, but not as warm as the air. They named it Furnace Creek. A great deal of digging in dusty records has been done by some students of history to prove that the creek was so named because the Darwin French party found the remains of an ore-smelting furnace in the wash. The evidence unearthed is extremely tenuous. In contrast, the July day of 1860 on which the Darwin French party first wallowed in that water was definitely hot. They named it Furnace Creek.

The party was no longer interested in mines. What they wanted most was to get out of Death Valley. They had had a hard time getting across it from the foot of the Towne's Pass trail. They would try the route which they had heard attributed to the Bennett-Arcane party. At least there must be potable water there, and they knew of no other on the western side of that glimmering, heat-hazed hell hole. Why hadn't someone told them it was so damned hot, instead of talking about a silver mountain? It did not occur to them that it might be cool in winter. A place as hot as that could never cool off in one season. It would take centuries.

Dry to the bone again, they came to the abandoned camping place of the Bennetts and Arcanes. No doubt about that. Here were wagons falling to pieces in the desiccating sun, ox-yokes, chains, remnants of cloth, ashes of campfires, even crude toys abandoned by the children.

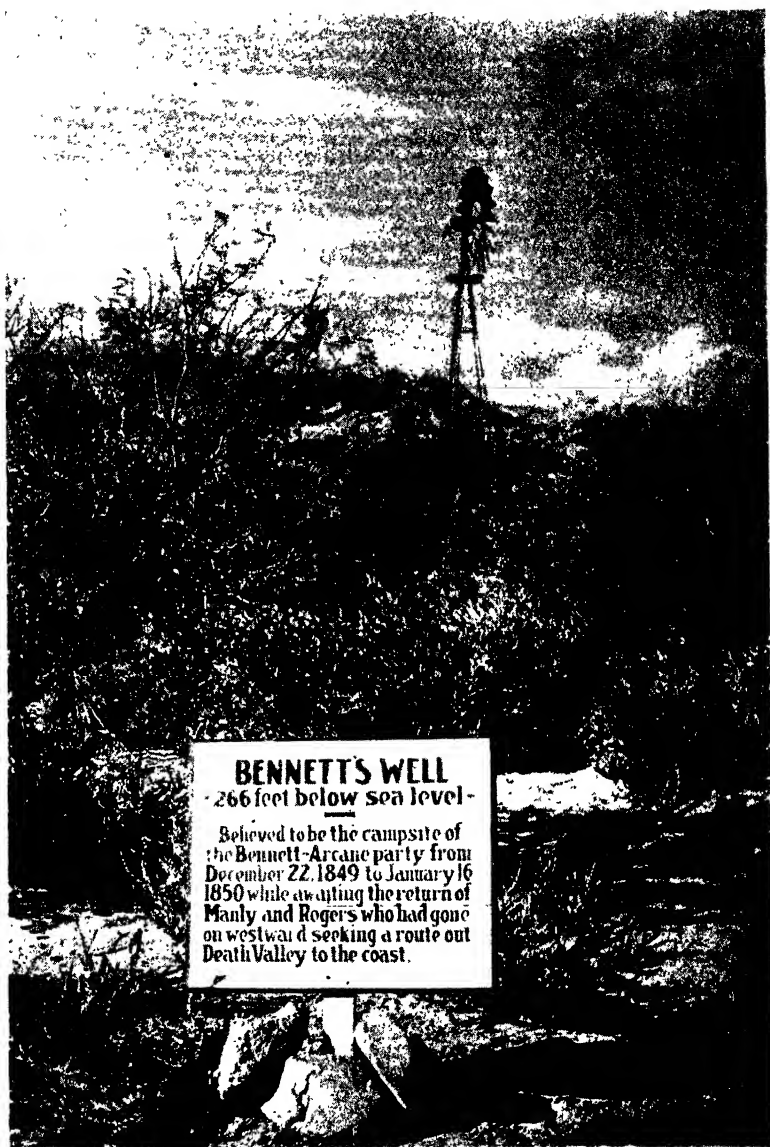
More important to the newcomers in July, there was water. They named it Bennett's Well.

There has been some wasted effort to prove that Bennett's Well was not named for Asahel Bennett at all, but for "Bellerin' Tex" Bennett, who came that way in 1870, or perhaps for Charles Bennett, who drove a mule team by in 1880-odd. Some folks do love to start an argument.

What the Darwin French party wanted was not an argument, but water. They found it in a hole near the abandoned Bennett-Arcane wagons. They used it gratefully. The arguments about whether the exact location was at the harsh oasis still known as Bennett's Well, or at a point now called Tule Spring, a few miles north, were not to start for another fifty years. Long after the last of the wagon beds and frames and wheels had been burned by camping prospectors, and the last of the iron had been removed by Indians and others, thus removing the tangible identification of the site, the argument-lovers rushed in with quotations from various emigrants of 'forty-nine, to prove that Bennett really camped at Tule.

Wherever it was, the Darwin French party camped there ten years later. They didn't stay a month. It was too hot. They soaked up all the water they could in a day or two. Even that was difficult. There was plenty of water in the hole but there wasn't enough in the air.

In later years meteorologists found that the relative humidity in Death Valley in summer drops to five per cent or less while the temperature rises to 135 degrees in the shade. Normal relative humidity throughout most of the United States averages about sixty per cent.



**BENNETT'S WELL**  
- 266 feet below sea level -

Believed to be the campsite of the Bennett-Arcane party from December 22, 1849 to January 16, 1850 while awaiting the return of Manly and Rogers who had gone on westward seeking a route out Death Valley to the coast.

*Courtesy U. S. Dept. of Interior.*

**Bennett's Well**



*Courtesy U. S. Dept. of Interior.*

View from Auguerberry Point, more than a mile high in the Panamints. The view is toward the southeast. Badwater, lowest spot in America, is in the white area against Dante's View in the Black Mountains to the left. Through the gap at the right comes the Amargosa River, seeping underground.

You may have heard the sweating populace of Oklahoma City, Chicago, Philadelphia, and points north, east, south, and west on a July day complaining that, "It isn't the heat; it's the humidity." Human beings are hard to satisfy. Any one of those complainers, on a July day in Death Valley could say, "It's the lack of humidity." The kiln-dried air saps moisture from the pores of a human being—even a motionless human being lying in the shade—almost as fast as he can pour it into his mouth.

On a summer day in Death Valley a man is not conscious of perspiring. Although a gallon of water may be swallowed every hour, the dry air reaches right down into the pores and snatches it out before it has time to wet the skin. The kidneys hardly get a chance to work at all. Water seems to go almost as straight from the stomach to the dry skin as it goes from the canteen to the stomach. Bill Corcoran, who prospected and mined in the neighborhood for twenty-odd years, once dried out sixty of his 185 pounds in three days. It required forty days in a hospital on an ice cream diet to get enough of that moisture back so he could walk.

Cy Johnson, of Beatty, who drove an eighteen-mule team, freighting from Rhyolite to the Keane-Wonder Mine on the Death Valley side of the Funeral Mountains from 1909 to 1911, told me that after his first trip he got no sleep for twenty-four hours because he was too busy replacing the water that had been extracted from his system in one four-hour period of the journey. He sat up all one day and one night doing nothing but drinking water.

Of course Cy's experience was a little out of the ordinary. Most persons in a Death Valley summer do little but sit, or lie, and drink water. Cy had to work. On one sharp curve he was so occupied with the task of getting the eighteen mules around the turn that he momentarily neglected the trail wagon. The trail wagon, loaded with five tons of coal, and



some other things, swayed from the narrow road and turned over. Cy had to get the three-ton wagon back on its four wheels, and load in the five tons of coal and other merchandise. He had been hired to get that stuff to the Keane-Wonder, so that was what he did. But it took him four hours, during which he drank all the water within reach. It was not enough. All that night and the next day he was busy trying to supply the deficiency. He swore he would never go back. But when his balance of moisture had been restored, he did go back, and continued to go back through most of the 150 following weeks.

When Joe Goodrich was in charge of the Keane-Wonder he had an idea that made it easy. He had some thermometers specially made in San Francisco and guaranteed never to record a maximum temperature of more than 118 degrees. The men could stand a temperature of 118. They knew it was far hotter than that on the Death Valley flat below. It probably was hotter than that in Ballarat, or even in Beatty or Rhyolite. They might as well stay at the Keane-Wonder. There was plenty of water there. Cy Thompson attended to that. The new thermometers did not tell them anything about the relative humidity.

That lack of humidity continued to dry out a great many men who were not sustained by comforting thermometers. Quite a number of them have been found dead in Death Valley with water still in their canteens. It isn't the humidity; it's the heat.

Shorty Donnelly is one who hasn't been found dead. Shorty prospected Death Valley and the surrounding desert for forty years. When I went to see him at his cabin in Las Vegas he came to the door in his underwear and admitted that my knock had wakened him. But he wasn't mad about it. And he did feel like it was about time for breakfast. If I'd come in he'd have it ready in two shakes of a boorow's tail.

Unfortunately for me, I'd already filled up on half a grapefruit and toast and coffee at the Oasis Cafe. I couldn't do a thing with Shorty's breakfast. But he could. It was amazing, what he could do. He got a fire going in the wood stove, and put on a two-quart pot of "miner's coffee." "Miner's coffee is a little water and a heluva lot of coffee and a heluva lot of boilin'." They balance its bitterness with a heluva lot of sugar, and considerable canned milk. When it's right, they say it will float an anvil.

That's the sort of coffee Shorty Donnelly makes. When it was under way he put on his pants and assorted clothing and proceeded to get breakfast. I sat in awe and admiration of that breakfast. I have a young mining friend, Keith Kunze, son of the partner of my own Death Valley days, who can eat twelve fried eggs for breakfast, but that is a specialty. I hadn't seen a breakfast like Shorty's since I saw Dave Eldredge cook and consume one on the Black Mountains side of Death Valley thirty-one years earlier. And Dave had missed a few meals before that breakfast.

Dave was a good-sized man. Shorty is short. About five-two, I'd guess. He doesn't look hollow. He looks very solid and very good-natured. I admire him tremendously. He's all man.

The breakfast began with a nice bowl of prunes; very appetizing prunes. It went on through a bowl of mush liberally sweetened, and lubricated with canned milk. It attained substantial proportions with one whole frying pan full of potatoes and another with bacon and two—only two—fried eggs. Then it soared to real gustatory heights on pancakes. Shorty brought it down to earth with half a dozen cups of the anvil-floating coffee.

Fortified, strengthened and comforted then, Shorty began to tell me about the relative humidity of Death Valley.

"Me and Jack Crowley started out from Tecopa, summer

of 'fourteen, for the Coyote Wells strike," he said. "It was toward the last of July. But we knew the water holes. Only we didn't know we'd find a dead cow in the first one. That put us off our balance a little. We took a wrong trail. We was very very dry. We made a dry camp, and the boorows moved out that night. Someway we got to Bradbury Well. We drunk a lot of water there. I mean a lot. It was only four-five miles to the Confidence Mine. We knew right where it was. The Mormon Church owns the Old Confidence. Shorty Harris had some ground down there. Mebbe he'd be there. Mebbe somebody'd be there. Well, we made it. I reckon I lost twenty pounds on that trip. I was some dried out. The boorows was down at the south end of the Amargosa River, where it turns under ground into Death Valley. I got 'em back.

"Another time in summer I started out to go to the Carbonate Mine to do something for Dicky Jones. Dicky was superintendent of the Carbonate. I packed five boorows. A truck was goin' to leave water for us at the Ashford Mill. That's down in the south end of Death Valley. Someway, it didn't get there. I had two gallon canteens. I emptied 'em both in 'leven miles, and it wasn't enough. Not near enough. That country's awful dry in summer. I know. Four o' my boorows died on the Carbonate dump. One died the next day at Warm Springs. Dicky Jones paid me one hundred dollars for them five boorows. He felt bad about the truck not leavin' water for us."

Yes, the relative humidity is very low. Not everyone fares as well as Shorty Donnelly. Not everyone is as competent a man in the desert as Shorty. He has made a living there for forty years. Sometimes it has been a very good living. Certainly he has earned his breakfasts, and his dinners and his suppers. More power to his appetite. May he live long, and die in comfort with plenty of water—cool water—at hand.

One might not fully understand it, unless he has been

there, but it is rather important that the water be at least slightly cool. Harold Ashford, one of the brothers whose name identifies the ruined mill which is still a landmark in the southern tip of Death Valley, knows a good deal about that. He has been in the immediate neighborhood nearly forty years. He is a gentleman, a geologist, an experienced Death Valley prospector, a mine owner, and a scholar, especially interested in the occult. At his well-provisioned mine, high in the southern peaks of the Black Mountains overlooking Death Valley, he gave to me and my Memory one of the best oyster stews I've ever eaten outside of New York's Grand Central Station or Harvey's in Washington, and suggested that I read *The Lost Continent of Mu*. This is the place to give his testimony with reference to water.

"The canteens should always be covered with felt, or blanket, or canvas at least," said Harold Ashford. "When the sun strikes straight on the metal it does something to the water within. It seems to poison the water. A drink of such water almost instantly causes cramps and vomiting. Cramps and vomiting are bad things to have in Death Valley in the summer. There is only one thing I know that will relieve the sickness caused by drinking the water from an uncovered canteen in the Death Valley summer sun. That is Davis's Pain Killer. That's the only remedy. Some men have tried whisky. There's nothing worse than whisky in Death Valley in the summer. It is even more deadly than the water from an uncovered canteen. Davis's Pain Killer. It's the only antidote for water poisoned by the sun on an uncovered canteen. Believe me, I know."

Still other experienced experts have testified that the summer sun has the effect of filling the canteen with steam the moment the cap is removed. It must be very distressing when one starts to take a drink of much-needed water to find that one has attached one's mouth to a steam jet.

Evidently, one should try to keep the water cool. That is

quite a problem. I asked an old desert character about it. He was a dry old man.

"Well," he said, "I'll tell you. But whatever I say, I stand on my constitutional rights. It mustn't be used against me. Is that clear?"

"Yes," I said. "I'm an old-time newspaper man. I always protect my sources if they want to be protected. I used to run a paper in the Black Mountains, on the rim of Death Valley. That was thirty-three years ago, and no one has complained yet about having their confidences violated."

He looked me over critically, skeptically. "Was that Greenwater?" he demanded. "That's the only camp in the Black Mountains that ever had a newspaper. She had two, the *Miner* and the *Times*, and a little kinda magazine they called the Death Valley *Chuckwalla*. It was the damndest thing. I remember it. It told you on the cover that as soon as you had paid ten cents for it you could do what you damned pleased with it." He paused and looked me over again. "But it was too rough," he said. "Butcher paper."

"Yes," I said. "That was in Greenwater."

"Is that the one you run, that *Chuckwalla*?"

"Young Kunze—C. E. Kunze—and I ran it," I said, happily disguising responsibility in a garment of modesty.

"Well, I be damned. You remember Dave Eldredge. He used to live with you and Kunze there for a while. I was one o' the fellers that went out lookin' for him when he was lost in Death Valley. We never did find him. It was awful hot in the valley. Fourth of July when he didn't show up. It was awful ungodly hot. An' dry. It was very very dry."

"Now you're getting around to the subject," I said. "You were going to tell me how to keep your water cool in Death Valley in the summer, if I promised not to use the information against you. I give you the word of the whole staff of the Death Valley *Chuckwalla*. Shoot!"

"Well," he said, "I guess that'll do. You boys used to make a lot of lies read like the truth. You've growed up now, an' got even homelier. I s'pose you'll make this truthful information I'm agoin' to give you sound like a lie, but I'll take a chance, seein' as you promise not to use my name.

"Well, you know in Death Valley it ain't the humidity; it's the heat. I figured this out my own self the summer of nineteen and ten when I was layin' over a day at Furnace Creek Ranch. That was when Oscar Denton was runnin' the ranch. You know Oscar?"

"Sorry, I missed Oscar."

"Well, I was layin' there in the shade o' the house, watchin' the flies crawl up the doorjamb. 'Bout that time o' year the flies quit flyin' in the valley, and start crawlin'. Their wings is burned off. And the chickens start to wadin' in the creek. They hold out their wings to let the air under, and wade in clear up to the wishbones, and stand there with their beaks wide open, gaspin'. Well, I was watchin' phe-nom-e-na like that, and I noticed the olla full o' water, hangin' there in the porch smokin' away like it was on fire. I says to myself, 'It must be a hot day. I disremember when I ever saw water burn before.' That made me kinda thirsty, and I got up to get a drink. I dip the gourd in the olla, and do you know that water was right cool. It stimulated my mental processes.

"I figured it out. It ain't the humidity, it's the heat. There ain't no humidity at all. It's plumb dry. So when you hang water up in a jar like one o' them ollas, and let the dry air get at it all around, the air just naturally sucks out the water at every pore of the jar, and evaporates it, and that's what looks like smoke. And some way I can't figure out, that's what makes the water cool. I figure you ought to be able to cool it a lot more by fixin' it so it would do the same thing faster.

"So when night come on, and the temperature dropped down to a reasonable hundred and twenty, I made me a

waterbag out of some canvas, and filled it up and packed my boorows, and said good-by to Oscar, and started for Beatty. Makin' the bag, and explainin' it all to Oscar took some time, and I got a late start. I was only half way to Stovepipe Well when the sun came up and it begun to get warm. Pretty soon I wanted a drink. So I got the waterbag off a boorow, and tipped it up to get a nice, cool drink, and what do you think?"

"I can't think."

"Well, nothin' come out. That's the funny part of it. My figurin' was too good. The evaporatin' had been so fast that it froze what was left in the bag. I ripped it open and there was a chunk of ice inside. By that time I need a drink of water terrible bad. I still had four-five miles to go to Stovepipe Well, and the temperature was up to a hundred and fifty in that sun."

"Oh, you carried a thermometer too, as well as an ice plant."

"Everybody carries a thermometer in the valley, only most of 'em don't know how to read it. All you do is hold out your hand in the sun, back up, and when the fingernails bust loose at the back end its a hundred and fifty."

"Well, what did you do about it? Five miles to go in the sun at one hundred and fifty; no water, and the relative humidity at zero. It must have been pretty tough."

"Yeh; it must of. But I made it. I was unconscious of course, but I must of made it, because that's where they found me. It was several years later."

"Who found you? How did you manage to live all that time?"

"I didn't. A feller named Brownie found my skeleton in that old dugout that used to be at Stovepipe Well."

"Oh yes; I know Brownie. His name is W. H. Brown."

He's a deputy sheriff. He told me about finding that skeleton. He said there wasn't any skull."

"Yes; that's right. That was me."

It seems clear that the relative humidity is dangerously low in Death Valley in the summer. It does strange things to people. The Darwin French party in the summer of 1860 were the first white men to discover it. They moved away from their camp at Bennett's Well as quickly as possible, and found their way back to the San Joaquin Valley over the route they had come. They had found, identified, named and recorded a number of historic spots. But somehow they had missed the Gunsight.



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## CHAPTER III



### HOW SMART THE INDIANS ARE

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THE Darwin French party had Death Valley all to themselves in that summer of 1860. When they got out they said anybody could have it. There was not even an Indian there. The Indians were smarter than the white men. They had left the valley in June, before the white men arrived, and were climbing the Panamints ahead of the heat.

The Gunsight seekers must have met some of the Indians in the cooler altitudes, for it is recorded that they named the mountains Panamints for the Indians.

The Panamint Indians according to A. L. Kroeber, leading authority on the subject, were also known as Kosos. They were a minor group of the Plateau Shoshoneans, dividing the Mono-Bannock and the Ute-Chemehuevi groups, and occupying the desert eastward from Owens Lake, across the Panamint Mountains and Death Valley. Northward in Nevada, Northern California, Eastern Oregon, and Southern Idaho, the Paiutes were also of Shoshonean stock, according to ethnological data, but differing in various characteristics and not on very good terms with their distant cousins. The Shoshoneans or Shoshones occupied the entire great basin from the Rockies to the Sierras. Even the Hopis and Comanches were Shoshonean, though they did not know it, and were inclined to fight with their neighbors. The Shoshonean stock formed the great Indian family of the West as did the Algonquin in

the East. It took the ethnologists to figure that out. The Indians did not care.

Most white men, who have not gone in heavily for ethnology, are content to call the Death Valley and Panamint Indians Shoshones, though some do not differentiate them from Paiutes. That seems to satisfy the majority of the Indians.

There is a settlement and station on the Tonopah & Tidewater Railroad, just east of Death Valley, called Shoshone. That is where most of the prospectors who still range that area obtain their supplies. It is where State Senator Charles Brown courteously officiates at the gas pump and manages the general store and distributes the mail when he is not senating. It is where the famous geologist, Dr. Levi Noble, stops between scientific expeditions into the neighboring mountains, and where Dorothy Noble occasionally sits in the store and separates the grain from the chaff of the desert characters, and most highly prizes the chaff. It is an interesting spot in the desert. It has water, and trees, and houses, and spacious dugouts equipped for housekeeping in neighboring cliffs. You'd be glad to get there, on a hot day.

No wonder some of the Indians are beginning to attach importance to a name. But "ethnologically?" That's too much to expect a Death Valley Indian to enunciate, let alone to understand. They may be proud, but most of the rising generation at least are stupid beyond belief.

Perhaps the older generation was brighter. Indian George is the only representative I know, personally. He is smart enough to have maintained himself through a hundred years in a country where a number of white men were unable to survive a single year, or even a single month. He is smart enough to have lived much of his life without work.

"Where you get water, George?" I asked, as we sat together against the rusty sheet-iron wall of a shed at his goat

ranch. There was a crystal-clear little stream perhaps two feet wide running across the road a dozen steps away. "Where does that come from in this dry country?"

He gestured broadly toward the near-by Panamints. "I diggum ditch," he said. "I work one month."

Maybe the older generation is smart. There was Hungry Bill and Panamint Tom and Shoshone Johnny and Old Doc, all contemporaneous with Indian George. All were able to maintain many many years of life in that desolate country, and incidentally to acquire a reputation for themselves. Dad Fairbanks, christened Ralph J., at this writing eighty-three years old and itching to get back to the desert from a more or less temporary sojourn with a daughter at Santa Paula, is the only white man I know who has taken a living, and a good living at that, out of the desert for anything like the length of time these older Indians have done so. Most of Death Valley Scotty's living in those same years has come from Chicago.

I first met Dad Fairbanks at the ranch and stage station he operated at Ash Meadows in the Amargosa Desert, on the Johnny's Siding-Greenwater road, in 1906. He was working then. He had worked for many years before that. He worked for many years after. And he made it pay, in cash and honors. There is no desert man who has more friends or admirers.

He knows more about the older Indians than any white man knows—not ethnologically speaking. When he could find time from his most pressing responsibility—that of providing a living for his wife and steadily increasing family—he prospected the whole country from Idaho to the Colorado River. He came to Death Valley in 1898. It had a pretty bad reputation among desert men by that time. So Dad Fairbanks hired Panamint Tom to go with him.

Tom knew the trails and water holes. He knew how to catch a chuckwalla. It's quite simple after you know how. But

the white man didn't know. If the white man was reduced to eating chuckwalla, and was lucky enough to chase one into a crevice in the rock, he couldn't get it out. The chuckwalla would puff out his loose and leathery skin into every tiny hole and crack, and if the white man could get a hold on the end of his tail he could pull until the tail came off without budging the chuckwalla.

But the Indians had been nourishing themselves with these big lizards for many generations. Before the white man came they would cut a mesquite stick two or three feet long with one of the thorns standing out sharply near the end, and slip it into the crevice under the chuckwalla. When the thorn was under the chuckwalla's throat, the Indian would twist the stick, give it a little jerk, and literally deflate the chuckwalla. It was no trouble then to pull him out. It was even easier after the white men began to scatter pieces of bailing wire around the desert. After that the Indians didn't have to cut a mesquite stick. A piece of wire, bent into a hook at one end, was better.

That was the sort of thing Panamint Tom knew. He also knew that if you boiled squaw cabbage twice—once to remove its poisonous and nauseating juices, and again to make it reasonably palatable—it would help materially to sustain life. He knew a lot of things like that that had kept his people alive in spite of Death Valley.

So Dad Fairbanks hired him. Hungry Bill was Tom's brother. He wasn't hired, but he was hungry, and he was smart, so he tagged along whenever he could. If Bill was lucky, Dad Fairbanks might kill a bighorn sheep in the neighboring mountains, and invite him in to help eat it. Helping to eat a bighorn was one of the things Hungry Bill did best. He was six feet four, and had an appetite all the time like Shorty Donnelly has for breakfast.

"I seen that galoot load away five or six pounds of curl-

horn mutton at a single sitting and top it off with a dozen hardtacks and enough beans for four men," says Dad Fairbanks.

A few meals like that made Hungry Bill feel very kindly toward the white man. Tom felt kindly also. Dad didn't make him work very hard, and seemed appreciative of the Indian lore and desert wisdom and information as to water holes which Tom provided. For good measure, Tom added a few bits of personal information. He told Dad Fairbanks that he had killed three white men. He explained that they needed killing. So it was all right, and Dad didn't do anything about it except to be careful not to turn his back on Panamint Tom after that.

Dad learned a lot about the Death Valley Indians and the Panamint Indians and the Amargosa Indians who centered around the springs at Ash Meadows, over to the eastward. Tom and Bill told him that they had seen the Jayhawkers come in, and had watched them perish. The only trouble with that story is that the Jayhawkers did not perish in Death Valley. The records show that the only member of the scattered parties of 'Forty-Niners who actually perished in Death Valley was Captain Culverwell, who died at the foot of the Panamint slopes near Bennett's Well. The few others whose deaths have been verified were all outside the valley before they succumbed.

Tom and Bill told Dad some other things that furnish a sidelight on Death Valley. They told him how it was made. They had learned that from their papa, who had learned it from his papa, and so on back to the beginning of the ground afire. It seems that the Indians were contemporaneous with the gods. One god was the snake. The Indians knew he was a god because he was more clever than the Indians. He could run without feet. Also he could live without work. That convinced the Indians that the snake was a god. Other gods

were the buzzard, the raven, the lizard, and the rabbit. The Indians knew they were gods because the Indians were smart, and still they could not do the things that the animals did. But even the gods could make mistakes. They made more and more mistakes until the later generations of the animals were no better than the Indians themselves.

The first great mistake was made by the rabbit-god. He quarreled with the sun. In those days the sun wandered around wherever he liked. He made some places too hot, and left others too cold. So when the rabbit-god awakened from a long sleep and found that the sun was trying to burn him up, he was very angry. He knew that the sun was afraid of him because he was a powerful god. So he seized his bow and arrows and chased the sun over the rim of the world. The sun hid in a cave underneath. When he came out the rabbit-god wet an arrow with his own tears of anger and shot the sun in the face. The sun fell on the earth and started a fire.

The fire melted a great hole in the earth. All the other animal gods and their contemporary Indians fled in panic, and shed a great many tears of terror as they fled. The tears turned to steam and lifted up a lot of mountains on both sides of the fire hole. Some of the steam is still coming out of Coso Hot Springs. You can see it yourself. And the source of Furnace Creek is still warm.

That is the way Death Valley was made. It isn't precisely the way the geologists, such as Dr. Levi Noble, explain it, but it is an explanation satisfactory to the older generation of Indians. And even the geologists admit that there were some faults contributing to the formation of Death Valley, if no mistakes. The geologists also admit that there was a tremendous amount of heat there at one time, within the earth as well as upon it. The faults, plus the force of gravity, resulted in the sinking of what is now the floor of the valley, and the heat helped to lift the mountains on either side.

From that time on, the Indians were able to take care of themselves, despite the fact that they were considerably annoyed by evil spirits. Those in the air sometimes gave the Indians headaches. Those in the water gave them bellyaches. But by keeping out of the most super-heated air in the summer, and avoiding the water holes where the most evil spirits lurked, they managed to survive.

Still, they noticed that some of the evil spirits could not be avoided. The evil spirits attacked in greater and greater force as a man or woman grew older. Obtaining a living from that desert land was sufficiently difficult, without having to care for the old folks who were beset by evil spirits.

The Indians made long journeys in search of food. Up the Panamint hunting grounds for rabbits and quail and bighorn sheep in the early summer, with stops to gather the edible beavertail and other cacti which find Death Valley too hot for their comfort. Satisfying meals of crickets and grasshoppers. On to the pine-nut forests, where half their winter-supply of food—one of the few foods which they knew how to keep in quantity—was gathered. Back into the warmth of Death Valley in the autumn, where the mesquite beans had ripened, where the chuckwalla waited to contribute a morsel which would put the finest frogs' legs to shame. They clustered upon the low sandhills below Furnace Creek wash, where the water nourished the mesquite and the mesquite attracted kangaroo rats and pack rats. Being quick of hand when their dinner depended upon it, the Indians could knock over a foraging rat with a stick or stone, and roast him in the fire. From a blind beside the pools they could kill the ducks which rested there in the migration seasons, and dry them in odorous lines.

If they were on good terms with their neighbors to the eastward, on the slopes of the Charlestons, they might even get in on the April feast of the Agave, which grew there in

profusion. The Agave, which somewhat resembles the Century plant, might for gustatory purposes be better compared to a colossal artichoke. The bases of its inner leaves and the thick center from which they spring are excellent food when covered in a pit of hot stones sprinkled with water, and left to steam for two days.

Altogether, the continuous search for food kept the Indians very much on the move. That is why the older Indians were impressed by the fact that the evil spirits were closing in upon them when they found it hard to keep up with the procession. But there was a way, supported by Indian tradition and custom, to foil those spirits. The old folks simply dropped out of the procession and starved to death. Probably that was what the man whom Manly found alive but half buried in the sandhills in 1849 was doing. It was better to foil the evil spirits which beset old age and starve with honor than to live with the dishonor of holding back the tribe's search for food.

That was the custom and the practice of the Death Valley Indians when the scattered parties of 'Forty-Niners came through the region. The Rev. J. W. Brier has added corroborative testimony to that of Manly. "Two of the men came upon an old Indian in a depression, with the sand packed about him, but his head left exposed. One of them mistook him for a wolf and was about to shoot him when the other exclaimed, 'My God! It is a man!' He was released from confinement, and we watched him catch beetles for food, and visit the nearby branch for a drink, though his eyes may have been dead for a quarter of a century."

Such is no longer the custom. Since the coming of the white man, and especially since the coming of old-age pensions, the evil spirits which beset the feeble Indians and worked through them to restrict the food-hunting movements of the younger generation have been almost destroyed. Isn't



civilization wonderful? The older and blinder an Indian becomes now the more likely he is to obtain a pension. Thirty-five dollars a month buys a lot of candy bars and ice cream cones, and is very discouraging to evil spirits. A candy bar is much more pleasing food than a cricket. The mesquite beans can fall to the desert mice and pack rats. The squaws who once ground the beans by hand in *metates* to make a sort of meal which in turn would make a crude sort of bread, don't have to do that any more. The rats and mice probably are fatter now than they were ninety years ago, but the Indians don't care about that either. They don't look upon them as valued food any more. The Indians are fatter too.

The older squaws trudge in the dust on the trails of their sons as formerly they trudged on the trails of their fathers, but they do not have to labor for a week making a basket that will hold water, into which they can drop squaw cabbage or a tender joint of cactus, and a succession of hot rocks for the boiling. They can buy a tin pail for a dime. The result, of course, is that they have almost lost the art of basket making.

A paternal government, operating through the National Park Service, is planning to revive the art, and establish a trading post in Death Valley where the Indian women can sell baskets, but the women are not very enthusiastic. They would rather have a pension. They are still willing to climb the mountains and gather pine nuts in their season. The piñon forests at an altitude of several thousand feet are cool when Death Valley is very very hot. The Indians like the pine nuts. Even the white men like them. They command a good price in Barstow and Las Vegas and Reno. With the cash profits from part of the annual crop, the Indians can buy canned peaches and canned salmon which keep through the winter as well as the nuts once kept, and relieve the squaws of the necessity of cooking.

The little Indians enjoy the harvesting too, and wax fat

and oily on the sweet rich little nuts. The little Indians have always enjoyed life, even though, as George says, they didn't get much to eat when he was a little boy ninety years ago. Especially in the mountains in the summer and during the pine-nut harvest the children enjoyed themselves. They could run around naked in more comfort in the summer in the mountains than they could in the winter even in Death Valley. And before the coming of the white man with a supply of cast-off garments most of the Indian children were generally naked. Rabbit skins and an occasional bighorn sheep skin helped to clothe them in emergency, but their elders appropriated most of that raiment. The Death Valley Indians never developed an art of blanket weaving, or of any cloth making. All their time was devoted to the acquiring of food. But still the children had a lot of fun. They had swings of rope braided from Joshua-tree fibers. They had crude dolls of wood and clay. They had toy bows and arrows. And like all the children of mankind they had sufficient imagination to give realism to their toys, and excitement to their games.

But theirs was an imagination which apparently ceased to function at an early age. In the old days some imagination was kept alive by the repetition of the tribal lore and legends. A white teacher's insistence that two and two make four doesn't seem to have quite the same effect. They learn a little, and then they quit. A few of the older people still repeat the tribal legends to the younger—legends improved and rounded out and made coherent to the white man's specifications. But the children would rather listen to a radio. They have no desire to read or write or figure. In due time, if they must work, they may get a job irrigating the date orchard at Furnace Creek Ranch, or emptying the garbage, or perhaps in these modern days a few larger boys can get into the CCC camp and help build another road in Death Valley.

The girls can marry. That is a complete career for an Indian girl. She doesn't need an education to have a baby. All she needs is an opportunity.

Of course there are exceptions, emphasizing the rule by contrast. There was one Indian girl in the school in Death Valley who had the I. Q. of a twelve-year-old. The authorities were very much excited and pleased by that. It is just a little unfortunate for those who are interested in the average Indian I. Q. that this paragon among the Indian children isn't quite all Indian. Her father was a Basque.

There is one Indian belief which has maintained itself despite the change of diet. It has lived stubbornly through half a century of white influence while the legends of a hundred centuries have been largely forgotten. It was discovered, alive and insistent, when the National Park Service decided to replace the flimsy wickiups and hogans of the Indians in the mesquite-dotted sand hills adjoining Furnace Creek Ranch, with substantial and appropriate and even artistic homes of adobe brick with palm-thatched porches.

The first attractive little house faced north. When it was completed by the CCC boys and proudly turned over to the Park Service for presentation to an Indian family, not a single family would move into it. The Indians were stubborn about it. They wouldn't move in, and they wouldn't explain why. It was very discouraging to the Service. But Ray Goodwin, superintendent of Death Valley National Monument, is an executive and diplomatist of parts. He caught an Indian in an unguarded moment, and learned that all Indian houses must face east. He accepted that without pressing for reasons.

He directed the boys to build another house facing east. The Indians wouldn't move into that either. Now what was the matter? Here he had built a handsome house facing east, and the Indians shunned it as they had the one facing north. He urged the Indian who had told him of the east-

facing necessity to move in. After long and stubborn refusal the Indian finally consented, but on one condition. He would like very much to accommodate Mr. Goodwin by moving into the house, but he must make one small alteration.

And what was that?

He must knock the back wall out of the house.

A slight alteration. Goodwin's eyebrows lifted. But he was game. He had built two houses, and if he couldn't induce an Indian to move into the one facing east without knocking out the back wall; well, he'd let him knock it out. But he also named one condition. He must be told why.

So the Indian told him that if one of his family happened to die in that house as it stood, the spirit would return through the familiar opening by which the body was removed. It would plead that it was lonely in the great outer world, and would induce some other member of the family to join it. Then there would be another death, and perhaps even more. If, on the other hand, the back wall of the house were knocked out, and the adobe bricks loosely replaced, a body could be removed through that hole as soon as the spirit had fled. The hole could be quickly refilled, and the lonely spirit could not find its way back to tempt others to join it.

It was quite logical. It also demonstrated the Indians' growing powers of reason under the white man's rule. They did not have to think up anything like that in the old days. With the old folks cheerfully remaining behind the regular migrations to starve to death, there had been no such problem. If a younger person happened to die in one of the flimsy wickiups, the returning lonely spirit could be foiled quite easily by burning the wickiup as soon as the body was removed. But the nice new 'dobe houses would not burn, so the Indians evolved the improved scheme. Who says they are not smart?

And Superintendent Goodwin is smart too. He permitted

the Indian to knock enough bricks out of the back wall to remove a body. The Indian moved in. After that the Park Service and the CCC boys built all the houses facing east, and with a large hole in the back wall filled with uncemented bricks. The Indians moved in as fast as the houses were finished. Now the village is a credit to its architects, appropriate to its setting, and an interesting addition to the scenic attractions of Death Valley.

Except for the changes of diet and clothing and housing, and the accompanying changes of economic habit, they are not much different from the Indians whom the Darwin French party encountered on the Panamint slopes in the summer of 1860. Now the Park Service is concentrating on the younger generation. So are some of the CCC boys. The boys seem to be getting more tangible results than the Park Service.

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## CHAPTER IV

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### A GOLDEN LURE—THE BREYFOGLE

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ABOUT the only thing of value that the Darwin French party took out of Death Valley in the summer of 1860 was the news that it was hot. They could draw a map, and show a way into the valley, passable for mules and horses. They could identify one unlimited source of pure water on the way in—Darwin Falls—and two adequate sources within the valley—Furnace Creek and Bennett's Well. They had made it comparatively easy to get into Death Valley, and out again. The one thing of importance that they had failed to do was to find the Gunsight Lode.

So Dr. S. G. George organized a smaller and more mobile party to take advantage of the information set down by the Darwin French party. Some subsequent reports state that George was a member of the prior party, but the only member of that party who has been adequately identified as a member of the second group is W. B. Lilley. In any event, George had the necessary information and equipment and energy to make a new try for the Gunsight. With W. T. Henderson, S. G. Gregg, Moses Thayer, J. R. Bell, and Lilley, he started out from Visalia when the weather had cooled, about three months after the Darwin French outfit came trailing back through the San Joaquin valley. They followed the Darwin French route to reach Death Valley late in October. The weather had altered to a delightful balminess. They enjoyed

it. They were the first white men to enjoy Death Valley. They started something. Thousands enjoy it every winter now.

But that was seventy-nine years ago. Scenery and climate were enjoyable, but incidental to the George outfit. What they wanted was the Gunsight.

They had plenty of provisions, good mules, and a bountiful supply of energy. They learned quickly what the Indians had known for centuries—that by digging a few feet in any area where the mesquite flourishes they could find potable water. They also found parts of human skeletons within a few hundred yards of springs. They found one of the abandoned emigrant camps, with wagon irons and chains and ox-yokes, and even the footprints of men, women and children in the packed sands. They assumed that the human bones were the bones of emigrants. More likely they were the bones of aged Indians pursued by evil spirits and left by their children to escape that pursuit by starving to death. They camped in comfort in Death Valley for several weeks, and found many things of interest, but they did not find the Gunsight.

In the course of their explorations they encountered a party of prospectors including several Mormons, led by Charles Alvord, a notable prospector of the day, and accompanied by Asahel Bennett, who, in the interest of a possible mining discovery, had come back to the scene of his hardships of a decade earlier.

Alvord confided in Dr. George that his own party was becoming quarrelsome and threatening because he could not find the cliff of silver to which he had undertaken to lead them. He described the location as well as he could to elicit the help of the George party. But it was a large neighborhood, a hundred miles long, fifty miles wide, two miles high, and literally filled with cliffs and canyons. Furthermore, Alvord had not actually been up to the silver cliff. He had merely

seen it above a crevice in the mountains. Dr. George thought it seemed too far south of the Towne's Pass trail to be the Gunsight, so he declined to change his plans to make that search. The two parties again went their independent ways.

The George party discovered an antimony deposit in Wildrose Canyon, and celebrated Christmas Day, 1860, by christening that discovery the Christmas Gift. But they were not equipped to work it, and they moved on.

In the meantime Alvord had so aroused enmity of most of his associates that they decided to abandon him. Bennett went along. When he reported at the home of William R. Stockton, near Mission San Gabriel, he was astonished and delighted to meet his old friend and savior, William Lewis Manly. As soon as the story had been told Manly urged that they form a party for the rescue of Alvord. Bennett agreed.

Caesar Twitchell, a neighbor of Stockton's, volunteered to go, and the three men, Manly, Bennett and Twitchell set out with a train of nine mules. Thus, a decade after his original ordeal, Manly found himself back amid the scenes of those hardships, and again upon a mission of rescue. Camping high on the western slope of the Panamints they found Alvord, hungry and exhausted. It was decided that Manly should remain with him while Bennett and Twitchell went out with the mules for more supplies.

Prior to that, however, the George party had exhausted its hope of finding the Gunsight, and had started its retreat from the region. On the way they met a husky young Indian apparently about twenty years old. It was the third time he had seen a white man—once in the preceding summer when he glimpsed the Darwin French expedition, once in 1849, and now in the winter of '60-'61. He was not as much afraid of them as he and his papa had been on the first occasion. He had never seen them kill anyone. He could not understand



the white man's ability to take a seemingly exhaustless supply of food out of small packs on their mules. He was very curious about food. His whole life had been devoted to the search for it.

The Indian youth crept close to the white men's camps. He searched the camps after they had gone, and found scraps of bacon rind, and bread, and beans. They were delicious. He followed. When he was hungry enough he ventured into a camp and begged for something to eat. The white men fed him. It was marvelous.

They asked him where the mountain of silver was. He didn't know what they were asking, but he did know they were friendly. He admired their leader. He heard the others call him George. It was a good name. He adopted it for himself. Through the next eighty years Indian George was to be a friend of the white man. At the moment, not understanding their lingo, the best he could do was to show them some trails and springs, and consume all the bacon and bread and beans and sweetened coffee they would give him.

Eager to oblige, George showed the way up from Wild-rose Canyon toward the highest peak in all the Panamints. Perhaps he had confused the white men's sign language for silver with the Indian idea of anything bright and sparkling. The highest peak in the Panamints was bright and sparkling with snow in the winter sun.

Anyway, he pointed out the peak and the trail. The white men climbed eagerly. But the last mile is a good stiff climb, and by that time they realized they were getting into snow instead of silver. Only William T. Henderson had sufficient ambition to complete the climb. He was the first white man to stand upon that peak. It was a clear day, and through the clean dry air he could see five ranges of mountains to the west, the Slate, Argus, Coso, Inyo and the blue Sierra, crowned with the granite and snow of Mt. Whitney at the highest

point. To the east, two miles almost straight down were the vast white *playas* of Death Valley, and beyond were range after range of unnamed mountains, fading into the distance of a hundred miles or more. Due north he could almost see 130 miles to three clustered mountains of silver, later to be named Mt. Butler, Mt. Brower and Mt. Oddie, holding the site of Tonopah between them, but not to let the world know for another forty years. Southward, dimly blue against the far horizon, he could see the San Bernardino Mountains.

It was a high, wide, and handsome view. It still is. Persons who have faith in adjectives, and have sufficient breath to speak after that last mile climb, have almost choked to death upon the words they believed necessary to describe the encircling picture. Henderson simply looked and looked and looked, and finally called his vantage point Telescope Peak. It is still Telescope Peak. Go there some clear day. You can drive most of the way on a good road, and part of the way on a poor one. Ask the ranger. You will have to walk the last stage, but you will be rewarded if you can stand an altitude of 11,045 feet above sea level, 11,324.6 feet above the bottom of Death Valley. Take your lunch and your adjectives with you and make a picnic of it. You are not likely to have a better one.

It was definitely the high point of W. T. Henderson's trip with the George party. He told them they might as well go back to the San Joaquin. They agreed. A day or two later they found themselves in a region which reminded Dr. George of that which had been described by Alvord as the site of his lost cliff of silver.

Dr. George told his young Indian admirer about it with many signs and a few words which they had worked out in common. Indian George led the Doctor up a steep slope eastward from Panamint Valley, into a narrow ravine down which tumbled a mountain stream, almost filling the gap be-

tween high perpendicular walls. It was a surprising place. Alvord had told George his view of the silver cliff had been surprising. He had even named the place Surprise Canyon. This must be the same place. Dr. George was not only surprised but scared. It seemed to be too perfect a setting for a murder, and Dr. George didn't know Indian George admired him. So he signified that he had had enough. He put Indian George in front, and stumbled and clambered back down the canyon to Panamint Valley. Rejoining his party, he told them that he did not want a mine up that canyon. He wanted to go home.

They started, and again encountered Alvord. And this time, instead of having Asahel Bennett and a prospecting party with him, he had only the courageous William Lewis Manly, who had been reduced to a condition almost as unhappy as that of ten years earlier in the same region.

Bennett and Twitchell had failed to return with the needed supplies within the time limit allotted. In fact they never returned at all. Faced with starvation, Manly had started out with the ailing Alvord, on almost the same desperate journey he had made in behalf of the Bennetts and Arcanes. The George party helped the two men out to safety through Walker Pass. Manly never saw Bennett again, but many years later he encountered Twitchell who told him that they had encountered a storm which held them up for six weeks, and that they then decided it was too late to save the two men stranded in the Panamints. "It required some grace to become reconciled to this yarn," Manly wrote thirty-five years after the incident.

Alvord was a glutton for punishment. The next year he went back with a single companion, and again failed to find his silver cliff. So far as is known, he never came out. One record says he was murdered near Kern Lake. When Dick Jacobs, Bob Stewart and W. L. Kennedy found a human skel-

eton with a bullet hole through the skull slumped against the rocks near the mouth of Surprise Canyon ten years later, other prospectors suggested it might be that of Alvord. On the other hand, it might have been the skeleton of the man reported to have been put out of his misery by one of the 'Forty-Niners after he had broken his leg.

In the meantime Death Valley traffic was picking up a bit. Dr. George made another trip in 1861. Hugh McCormick led a party. Some Mexicans began mining operations near the southeastern point of the valley. Henry G. Hanks, California State Mineralogist, in a formal report published in 1883, is authority for the statement that Indians raided the Mexican encampment, stole all the provisions, and presumably drove the miners out. Later, said Hanks, the Mexicans returned, built a mill and operated the mine, but the Indians killed two men and burned the mill. Hanks placed the mine quite definitely nine miles from Saratoga Springs which are just within the extreme southeastern corner of Death Valley National Monument. He even identified it to the extent of writing that it was a pocket mine, and that one pocket yielded \$11,000 in gold. The Mexicans of those days were expert pocket miners. Probably they were there.

In the meantime Dr. Darwin French had heard about another attraction in the neighborhood. It was a place where the Indians used bullets of solid gold. The fact that most of the Indians still used bows and arrows seems to have been overlooked. The good Dr. French led another expedition to seek the source of the gold bullets. He didn't find that either, but he was somewhat impressed by evidence that Death Valley was more filled with strange tales than a Paiute medicine man.

There was a strange appeal about Death Valley to the men who invaded it in the 'sixties. Bennett went back twice and escaped by a narrow margin both times. Manly went

back, and escaped by the good fortune of meeting the George party. Alvord went back and was murdered. French went back, and again escaped. George went back to do some work on the Christmas Gift Mine, but four men whom he left to carry on the work were all murdered by Indians.

Then, for another decade, interest in the Gunsight Lode, and in Death Valley itself seemed to die away. The Comstock Lode was giving mine-conscious men all the excitement and about all the silver they could assimilate. Nevada had the call. The first proving of the Comstock's richness, coupled with the advisability of strengthening the federal government's anti-slavery bloc in Congress, had made the western half of Utah into a new state.

Eureka and Austin, White Pine and Pioche boomed while Virginia City and Gold Hill boomed. Momentarily Death Valley was almost ignored.

It was not prospectors or lost mine hunters then who made the next mass invasion of the region. It was politicians working through a surveying party with the intention of proving that a long wide slice of southwestern Nevada was in reality not in Nevada at all, but a part of California.

"This," they said, and entered in the record, "will throw within the limits of our State the rich gold and silver deposits of Coso, Esmeralda and Mono and a large part of Washoe."

Washoe was attractively close to the Comstock Lode. It seemed like a good idea. Lieutenant J. C. Ives and a party journeyed out to Fort Mojave where the northwest slanting boundary of California started from the Colorado River. On their trail moved Quartermaster Koutz with thirty-one men and elaborate equipment. Fort Mojave was to be the base of operations. Fourteen selected men were to travel from there an estimated six hundred miles northwest to Lake Bigler (now Tahoe), and mark the proposed new boundary. The journey, they calculated, would require sixty days.

The entire party remained in camp two miles below Fort Mojave for several days, awaiting the arrival of three camels which had been imported for the long journey. A letter to the San Francisco *Alta*, published March 4, 1861, states that it had taken the Koutz detachment twenty-two days to cover the 312 miles from Los Angeles. The author of that and subsequent letters, identified only as "J. H." throws a few illuminating shafts of light upon the situation.

The garrison of U. S. troops at Fort Mojave had been augmented since the massacre of sixteen emigrants by Indians two years earlier. It was not a contented garrison. The soldiers were talking of a rumored insurrection of the Southern States. "Many of the subordinate officers and privates sympathize with the movement."

The party of fourteen, mounted on three horses and eleven mules, with three camels and eleven mules carrying supplies and equipment, left the river on February 13, and struck out to the northwest. It took them fifteen days to cover less than 150 miles to Resting Springs, a little east of the southern end of Death Valley. About the only thing of interest they had learned was that camels were superior to mules in soft footing, but that mules were superior on steep or rocky ground. There was plenty of both sorts of ground to be covered. The camels had the edge over the mules with reference to water.

In flat, dry, sandy terrain they "continued all day working their long legs like the cranks of machinery, and on reaching the camping ground, sank down leisurely . . . showing as little concern as if they hardly cared a straw whether or not there was a drop to drink."

The camels again demonstrated their superiority on the water issue in the Amargosa Desert, apparently near what is now Death Valley Junction. The surveyors there dug a well four feet deep and got eighteen inches of water. "The

mules drank and were sick. The camels refused to drink."

According to the record printed in the *Alta*, that was March 2. It had taken only two days to do forty miles up the Amargosa River bed. They were doing very well. The next day, "Two or three miles from camp we crossed the faint trail of some emigrant wagons driving to the southwest, made in the year 1849 by a party on the way to California."

On the next day, March 4, "Our guide, Mr. Brooks, a good man, reached the limit of his knowledge of the country." That was no place to be guided by a man, however good, who had reached the limit of his knowledge.

They planned to go on anyway, but promptly ran into a region completely grassless even in March. From the first dry camp two men, McLelland and Deming, started out without permission to find water to the westward, where McLelland had been in the previous spring. When they failed to return, three men started out to find them, and followed their trail to the summit of the range that looked down into Death Valley.

The letter writer has left an effective description of that scene. "The bowels of the desert."

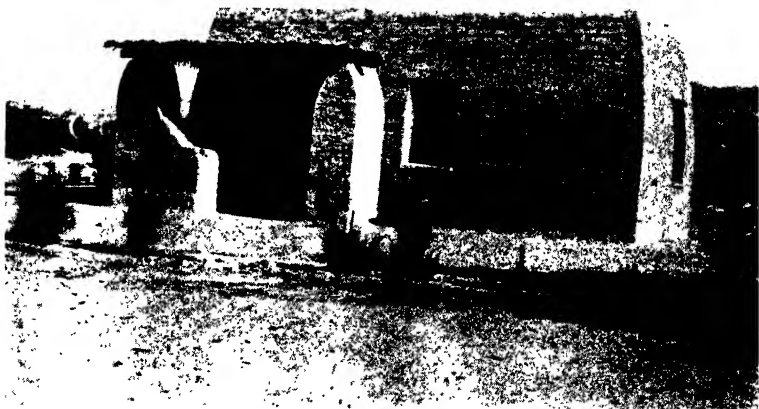
The rescuers worked down a canyon to the southwest, now identified as Echo Canyon. A half mile below its junction with a larger wash they discovered water and gratefully made camp at the source of Furnace Creek. Next day the good man Brooks decided to return to the main party and guide them down to this ample supply of water. He lost himself so completely that he was lucky to find his way back to the source of Furnace Creek for another night's camp.

The next day all three men were more hungry than thirsty. Together they started up Furnace Creek wash to find the main party. Half way up, they took a short cut. Like a great many mountain short cuts it led them a long way around. When they reached the camp, they found it abandoned. The



*Courtesy of Mrs. Harry Gower.*

Indian home of pre-National Monument days in Death Valley.



*Courtesy of Mrs. Harry Gower.*

Modern Indian home as erected by the CCC boys under National Park supervision. In the rear is an assembly of loose bricks which may be taken out to permit the removal of any who may die within, and hastily replaced to foil the spirit which is expected to return and induce others to follow.





*Courtesy U. S. Dept. of Interior.*

A study in light and shadow of Death Valley's sand dunes, near Stove Pipe Wells Hotel.  
Panamints in background.

trail of camels and mules, however, was clear. It led down Furnace Creek wash. At two o'clock in the morning, twenty hours after they had left their temporary camp, forty hours after they had eaten their last meal, they stumbled into the encampment of their companions. The two men whom they had set out to rescue were there.

The boundary expedition was thoroughly demoralized. They didn't care whether they added a six-mile-wide strip to California's eastern territory or not. But they were still a more or less scientific expedition, not seeking mines. They paused in Death Valley long enough to take barometer readings and to calculate the extreme depth of the valley at  $277\frac{1}{8}$  feet below sea level. That was a good job. The very latest and most scientific calculations have made it only two and one-half feet deeper.

They traced the emigrant wagon trails along the inner edge of the valley and around the head of Salt Creek, where bones of slaughtered cattle and remains of burned wagons marked the Jayhawkers' final encampment. They climbed over Towne's Pass and down into Panamint Valley, where they discovered something more surprising than the Gunsight Lode itself would have been. Panamint Valley was monumented with surveyors' marks, laid out for homesteading and settlement under the federal land laws. There was a surveying party. They took note and made note:

"Taking the fact into consideration that there is not a blade of grass in it, and not a foot of ground where any agricultural artifice could induce one to grow, the task of checking off this waste of sand for the occupation of the landless seems labor lost. . . . To say the least of it, it was a shameless misapplication of the appropriations for the public land surveys; and the men who reported it as coming under any class of either agricultural or grazing land, and were paid nearly a thousand dollars a township for pretending to subdivide it

(the law authorizing only such land to be sectionized) deserve to be prosecuted for their perjury."

That was in 1861. The boundary survey party was shocked, but not sufficiently shocked to do anything about it when they got back to civilization, which was as quickly as possible.

It was a profitable graft; more profitable than searching for the Gunsight. The perjuring surveyors were paid in gold, not in a questionable promise of silver. Only ten years later Death Valley itself was similarly surveyed. The records show that "C. M. S." on the maps—Charred Mesquite Sticks in reality—were set up to mark section corners. My friend H. Donald Curry, National Monument geologist, has found a few of them and decided that most have been pulled up through the last sixty-eight years by prospectors in need of fuel.

With the boundary commission's fiasco, interest in Death Valley momentarily waned. But Death Valley still had a trick up its sleeve. Several tricks, in fact. The first one it pulled after its success with the Lost Gunsight was the Lost Breyfogle. If it couldn't get any more persons into its clutches with a silver lure, it would try gold.

So one day in 1862, or thereabouts, Death Valley marshaled a group of its Indians on the Panamint side and prompted them to descend in the night upon an encampment of three white men, and murder two—O'Bannion and McLeod. Their death screams awakened the third man, Jacob Breyfogle, who had spread his blanket a little distance away to avoid precisely that end. Breyfogle seized his shoes and fled down the rocky slope. He next encountered white men 250 miles to the north, near Baxter Springs, Nevada. He was bleeding through rents in his rags. He was as near death as a man ever approaches without completing the experience.

But in his pockets was gold ore of fabulous richness. The

white men who took him into the new and flourishing mining camp of Austin saw the ore, and decided that Breyfogle must be nursed back to enough health to lead them to the source of those samples. They found that he had not been scalped. His bald head had merely blistered down to the bone under the desert sun. They nursed him carefully, and restored him to physical health. They could not do so well with his mental health.

Still, there were the samples of gold ore that would run a fortune to the ton. It must have been picked up somewhere between the western ramparts of Death Valley and Baxter Springs, Nevada. Breyfogle remembered the Indian attack in the Panamints, and his flight. He said he remembered crossing Death Valley, carrying water in his shoes. By that time he was pretty groggy. His recollections grew more vague. He might have picked up this ore in the Funeral Mountains either before or after he fell off a cliff, or was attacked by Indians, or went crazy with thirst. He could not be certain, but he was willing to go out with his benefactors and look for it. They started, and discovered not the mine, but that Breyfogle was crazier than they thought. Still, there was the ore. That was tangible and irrefutable evidence.

That is the story which a man who knew a man who had heard the first of it from Breyfogle's own lips, told to J. Frank Dobie. It is the story that Neill C. Wilson has put down in print. It isn't quite the same as Bourke Lee's version, that Breyfogle started out from Austin to guide a party to Yuma, and returning was found wounded and delirious at Stonewall Springs with some madly exciting specimens of gold ore in his possession.

It isn't quite the same as the story printed in the Death Valley *Chuckwalla* of April 1, 1907, which states that Breyfogle, on a long prospecting trip from Austin, found the rich ore in the Funeral Mountains near a point of five trails, cross-

ing starlike; that he carried the samples out to the Indian settlement at Ash Meadows, and was followed and tomahawked by a young Indian, but revived and eventually stumbled into Austin, bearing the samples, but completely out of his mind. The *Chuckwalla's* story brings the others a little closer together in its statement that Breyfogle came into the valley through the Panamints, as the Dobie and Wilson versions assert, though it gives his starting point as Austin instead of Los Angeles, as do those two. It agrees with the Lee version to the extent of placing the five trails crossing and, therefore, the approximate location of the lost mine in the vicinity of Daylight Springs. But there are obvious inaccuracies in the *Chuckwalla* story.

Still another account, published by W. A. Chalfant in 1930, starts Breyfogle from Austin on a prospecting trip with two horses which disappeared one night from his camp, leaving him afoot in the desert. In his ensuing thirst-crazed wanderings he picked up the gold specimens, and still had them when he returned to Austin after being rescued by Indians.

The fact that so many stories, of such variety, have appeared in print is cited to reveal the extent and influence of the Breyfogle legend. Both the verbal and later the printed reports agreed on a few main points. The tangible evidence of the ore was brought back to mining men by Jacob Breyfogle sometime in the 'sixties. He could not find the spot again. But he was willing to look, and most of his looking led to the Death Valley slope of the Funeral Mountains. So the others, hundreds of them, looked there too. They didn't find it either. They learned a great deal about Death Valley and its neighboring mountains. So wide was the search that prospecting sometimes was called Breyfogling by those who did not call it jackassing. Breyfoglers discovered some ore that was developed into the Keane-Wonder Mine on the west slope of the Funerals. It produced about as

much gold as it consumed—something like \$750,000. It has been shut down for a long time now. It was not the Breyfogle. Neither was the Chloride Cliff, over the ridge. Neither was Skidoo, southwest on the opposite side of the valley.

Prospectors are hard to discourage. Johnny Mills, who sits in the lobby of the Furnace Creek Inn in the evenings and on the terrace in the daytime and tells the best stories about Death Valley, looked for the Breyfogle for forty years. He didn't find it.

J. W. Trotter, commonly known as Doc, a bitter humorist among the prospectors of half a century ago, was the only man who ever located the Breyfogle. He erected a conventional prospector's claim monument in the Funeral Mountains, and placed his location notice between two of the flat rocks at the top, as is the custom of prospectors. It was a location notice to end all location notices, or at least to end all further search for the Breyfogle. I obtained a copy of it thirty-three years ago. It said:

"Notice is hereby given that we, the men that wrote this notice, is over the age of 31 and are citizens of the United States, Cuba and the Philippines; we do this day locate one gold mine. Known as the Breyfogle and more particularly described as follows:

"Commencing at this big monument of stone on a cold rainy night and running 35 hours with Indians after him come to a big canyon that leads up to the North with two big rocks on side of the mouth of the canyon the one on the right round and smooth, the one on the left rough and rugged. Follow up this canyon about five hours on burros or one and one-half hours on horseback you will come to the forks of the canyon. Take the left hand one and ride hard for two hours and you will come to an old stone corral. Go to the right of this about 9,000 feet and you will come to a small gulch leading up to the right. Go up this about a quarter of a mile you will come to a small water hole, sometimes it is dry.

"Water your animals here, fill your canteen and then go up until the gulch forks again, then take the right-hand one until it forks, then lead up the left one just a little ways you will discover the find we have been unable to locate. The canyon is yet and we take this means of locating the big find. The map of the above described property will be furnished to anyone on application to the undersigned. Located this first day of January, 1902.

Locator, J. W. TROTTER

"P. S.—Don't look for this mine in the summer time as it is dangerous.  
—Signed 'DOC.' "

Death Valley had really started something when it dropped a few gold-laden rocks into the pocket of Jacob Breyfogle. A few men, much younger and less experienced than Doc Trotter, still think they may find it. Most of the older men who have not died in the search, or after it, have decided that the original Breyfogle outcroppings have long since been buried by a landslide or demolished and scattered afar by one of the summer cloudbursts which occasionally alter the topography of the Funerals.

In any event, the Breyfogle was still a fresh and alluring story, not yet ripened into legend, when Harry Good Blasdel, first Governor of Nevada, organized a semi-scientific expedition which explored the valley in 1866, without finding anything of great value either to economics or science.

In the following year a Lieutenant Bendire led a party of army engineers and troopers from Owens Valley across Death Valley to Resting Springs, without recording much of general interest. The next officially organized expedition occurred in 1871.

Lieutenant George M. Wheeler and Lieutenant D. A. Lyle were assigned to take seventy-five men in two divisions and make a comprehensive report on the whole desert area from the new Central Pacific Railroad line across Nevada to

the Mexican border. The report was to correct the vague maps of the region, to provide geological data of interest to mining men, to study flora and fauna, potential agricultural possibilities, and meteorological conditions. It was a large assignment, in which Death Valley was supposed to be merely incidental. But Death Valley was never merely incidental. It lay in wait for the bold and the ignorant alike.

The thirty-three men of Lyle's detachment set out from Independence on July 21, planning to move eastward across the Inyo Mountains and a salt-paved valley beyond. The northern end of the Panamints and the northern end of Death Valley could then be easily crossed. Before they had traveled four days, scientifically equipped as they were, they began to realize their error. Saline Valley had been much too salty, much too hot, and much too dry for both men and beasts. It had turned the expedition somewhat northward, and by the time they made their third dry camp they did not know precisely where they were.

C. F. R. Hahn, a civilian guide, seeking water, set out eastward with one of the naturalists named John Koehler, and an Indian. When they failed to return by daylight, Lyle ordered his men to move. They found Koehler sufficiently alive to tell them that Hahn had made false starts through several canyons and had finally gone on alone. Hahn's field glasses were found three years later. His body was never found.

Lyle piloted his tottering men northward in a desperate search for water, and after two days found it at a point which they named Last Chance Spring near the extreme northern tip of Death Valley. Their contribution to the technical knowledge of the Death Valley terrain was practically nil. But they were game. They got back to Independence, and started out again on August 12.

This time they chose a route that they knew men had



traveled and survived—the way through Darwin wash to Wildrose Spring. They were to make a contact with Lieutenant Wheeler's detachment in Cottonwood Canyon, which divides the Panamints from the Cottonwood Mountains. But again a civilian guide went wrong.

Lyle's report to Wheeler states that he "dispatched Mr. Egan, the guide, who so kindly volunteered to lead us to this point," to meet Wheeler in Cottonwood Canyon and lead him to the Lyle camp. Egan was never seen again. But the record shows that the explorers and scientists did get across Death Valley and camp at Ash Meadows.

In the course of time the Wheeler detachment traveled some thousands of miles of western desert and more or less justified their expense to the taxpayers. The Lyle outfit's findings were virtually valueless. They gave at least two human lives for information which was already known to wiser desert men.

Death Valley was still practically unexplored—and unperturbed. In 1873 the golden Breyfogle was momentarily forgotten in a sudden revival of the silver Gunsight story. Very soon the Death Valley region was to see more white men than it had seen in the long centuries of its waiting.

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## CHAPTER V

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### A RAINBOW OVER PANAMINT

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INDIAN GEORGE shifted his position a little to get his back against a newly sun-warmed part of the rusty sheet-iron wall. He seemed very anxious that there should be no mistake in the record of his experiences with the white men through his century of life in the Death Valley region.

"First time," he repeated, "I'm little boy. See three men. Next time, I'm big boy. Man. Big as now." He grinned. "Bigger." George has a sense of humor. "I see five men. I watch. I not so much scared. I see they good men. No fight. No shoot. Plenty eat. By'm'by they see me. Give me eat. Good. I go 'long. One man name George. Very nice man. No talk Indian talk. Make sign. No good. Try hard. By'm'by I guess he want see silver in mountain. I take him up steep canyon." The old man pointed away to the southeast. "No go all the way. Too hard."

He paused to demand another verification of his recollections. "How long time ago, that?"

"Eighty years."

Again he nodded. "Long time," he said. "Next time I see two men. I no scared no more. I 'member white man's bacon, beans, good. I askum for eat. They no got much. Not like that George. They got gun. They know little bit Indian talk. They want place for hide. Shoot rabbit, quail, anything for eat. I takum up same canyon I take that George. Only, we

go all the way. They see silver in rock. They say, 'By God, George, this good mine.' They laugh like hell. They say, 'Wells Fargo have big time get up here.' They say, 'You stick with us, George. All get rich. Plenty beans and bacon.' They say, 'This better than Pioche, better than White Pine.' They laugh like hell."

Again he put his own familiar question. "How long time ago, that?"

"Seventy years."

"Plenty long time."

George shifted his shoulders to another warmed spot, and dragged on his cigarette. He had outlined the first twenty years of the white men's invasion of the Death Valley region, and had recited the three outstanding incidents of his own first thirty years. I prodded him with another question.

"What those two men named, George? Curran? Wilson? Dempsey? Scobie? Gibbons? Parker? Copely?"

George shook his head. He wanted very much to be accommodating, but this roster of the first fugitive residents of the Panamints was a little beyond him. "Long time ago," he said.

"Did they treat you good? Plenty beans?"

He brightened. "No so good as that George. Pretty good. They say, 'George, this Injun country. We like Injun. No want trouble. You sell us these mine, we pay you good. Pretty quick plenty white man come. Plenty beans, bacon, whisky, everything. You get good pay, savvy?' "

"And did you?"

"Ugh, pretty good. Plenty white men come quick. Make Panamint City. You savvy Panamint City?"

Yes, I savvied Panamint City. It was the first great mining excitement that really put the Death Valley region on the map of the desert. When I had assured George of that, he was satisfied to let the subject drop. Conversation lagged as

interest in Death Valley had lagged from 'forty-nine to the early 'seventies.

Death Valley was hardly more than a horrid legend to most Americans twenty-three years after it had tortured its first white invaders. Even in my own childhood some twenty years later and only 220 miles from that deadly region there was a horror-stricken belief that no one, no thing, could live within it. How much less the scattered forty millions of United States population, nursing the national headache of the panic of 'seventy-three knew or cared about Death Valley in that day is easy to understand. Most of them had never heard of it. A few searchers for lost mines, a few emigrants and federal agents, and a few fugitives from the justice of Nevada mining camps, had been there. That was all.

Probably 99.44 per cent of the population of the United States was too engrossed in the personal problem of earning its ham and eggs without government assistance in 1873 to be concerned with Death Valley in any of its phases. The nation had been running wild since the Civil War. The Tweed Ring had looted the New York city treasury of \$200,000,000. Jim Fisk, Jay Gould and friends had shaken ten millions out of the Erie Railroad and engineered their disastrous corner in gold. In the ensuing crash, eighty-nine railroads had gone bankrupt. Railroad building and supply was the leading business of the country, and those failures had put half a million railroad builders out of work. Half the iron and steel mills in the country had shut down. Forty-six thousand commercial houses failed. The national situation was sad enough without reference to Death Valley.

Only San Francisco and its heavily contributing Comstock Lode and scattered mining camps in the Nevada desert were in a position to hear and give the slightest heed to a word of allurements from that desolate waste. San Francisco boasted 130,000 population. Virginia City, on the Comstock, in

Nevada, claimed 10,000. Los Angeles was not boasting of its 8,000 residents. Austin, Eureka, White Pine and Pioche had some thousands of lively citizens who always had an ear cocked for the sagebrush telegraph, and a burro ready to take the trail.

San Francisco, only two decades above the ooze from which it had sprung, was extracting the most exciting part of its vitamins from the Comstock Lode. To be sure, Grass Valley, Angel's Camp, and others of the Mother Lode's best producers were still contributing A, B, and C. But D, the vitality vitamin, had come in with the \$200,000,000 taken from the Comstock in its first thirteen years, and was making San Francisco leap and rear and squeal around the mining stock boards like a Man o' War intent upon improving the breed of the American racehorse.

San Francisco was completely aware of all the possibilities of the mining business, both in the mines and in the mining stock exchange. San Francisco's awareness of its advantages and possibilities had extended its forces not only across the Sierra into the great Comstock but a few hundred miles farther into the Nevada desert.

Those desert mining camp dwellers were chock-full of vitamin D. It was an amazingly vital vitamin. It would make a man travel several hundred miles just for the fun of prodding the 130-mile long Gila monster that lay waiting in Death Valley, and putting a notice under his tail, to the effect that he was about to be dispossessed. Such a notice appeared early in 1873. It was signed by R. C. Jacobs, W. L. Kennedy and R. Stewart, and notified all men who could read writin' to gather at the camp of R. C. Jacobs & Co., in Mormon Canyon on February 10, 1873, to organize a new mining district and write laws to govern same.

If one did not know, one would not have suspected in 1873 that there was any human life in or around Death Valley or

its neighboring Panamint Valley just over the crest to the west, except a few furtive Indians and fewer and more furtive white men. But R. C. Jacobs knew. He had been a miner on the Mother Lode, a pony express rider on a desert run, and was quite familiar with the life and letters of such camps as Eureka, White Pine and Pioche, and the hasty departure of some of their more vital residents. He suspected that some of those nervous-fingered gentlemen might be rustivating in the Panamint country, and would see his notices wedged in a rock monument or impaled on a mesquite tree, and would come to his party.

He was right. A dozen or so appeared at the appointed place on the appointed day, slipping in cautiously from behind rocks after they had inspected the group and assured themselves that there were no officers of the law or Wells Fargo detectives present. They organized the Panamint Mining District to cover an area approximately twenty miles square from Death Valley over the Panamints to the Panamint Valley. They adopted for their own the mining laws which ten million dollars' worth of litigation on the Comstock had taught U. S. Senator Bill Stewart of Nevada how to write. They punctuated their decision with gunshots and pledged their mutual allegiance in Jacobs' demijohn of whisky. And that was the beginning of Panamint, the camp, the city, the new lure of the Death Valley region.

Of course, Jim Scobie and Hank Gibbons, a couple of tough hombres who had seen life and probably taken it in various Nevada camps, and had gone to the Panamints for their health, had already hiked up Surprise Canyon, and noted the towering cliffs with their wide tracings of rich quartz veins, and had laid claim to some. So had John Copely and others. The group at Jacob's camp included John Wilson, Jack Dempsey, Parker, and Curran. But the richest quartz, 200 miles from transportation and far more than that

from a smelter was not much good to men who wanted beef to eat and whisky to drink. Besides, their reputations were not very good in the centers of capitalism which might be interested if the right man came along with samples and a convincing assertion that this would be better than the Comstock.

Jacobs promised to be such a man. Kennedy had some business connections in San Francisco. Stewart had a reputation both as a prospector and a gun-fighter. So those who had already seen and claimed some of the most alluring ledges willingly took the newcomers into partnership on one basis or another, and the camp of Panamint was ready to declare itself to the world.

At the moment, however, San Francisco was too keenly interested in a revived Comstock to pay much attention to reports of another silver discovery twice as far away in distance, five times as far in time, and ten times as far in the discomfort of travel. San Francisco had recovered from the depression of the disastrous Yellow Jacket and Crown Point fires in the depths of the Comstock Lode. It was on the crest of a new wave of prosperity higher than anything it had ever experienced; higher in contrast to the depths of depression in which all the rest of the nation was sunk in the panic of '73.

One John P. Jones was generally given credit for lifting the city to that exalted point. Jones, at the age of forty, had gained wide fame and personal popularity as the hero of the Yellow Jacket and Crown Point fires in which more than forty men were killed. Shortly after that he had started the renewed Comstock boom by discovering a new bonanza in the burned-out Crown Point Mine, of which he was superintendent.

With Alvinza Hayward, a minor member of the Bank of California group then largely controlling the Comstock, Jones

began quietly to buy the two-dollar stock. They had acquired control before the news of the bonanza leaked out. Then the price leaped to ninety dollars. Three weeks later Jones cut the same ore body 200 feet below the level on which it was discovered, proving its tremendous size. The stock took another jump to \$180, and continued to climb. Jones was a multi-millionaire, and continuing to multiply.

The Comstock boomed again, and San Francisco boomed with it. That was the situation when the Panamint Mining District decided that it needed a big-shot mining man.

John P. Jones seemed the logical choice. But Jones was busy in the battle between the Bank of California ring and other interests in the Comstock and San Francisco; busy in his own mining and milling activities on the Comstock; busy in the United States Senate to which he had just been elected by the Nevada legislature.

Almost a year passed before a volunteer go-between, one E. P. Raines, a San Francisco mining stock-market hanger-on who had heard the call of the sagebrush telegraph and visited Panamint to verify its message, was able to interest Jones to the extent of \$1,000. Before he had encountered Jones he had made a visit to Los Angeles with a sackful of the richest ore from the surface of Panamint's outcroppings and had succeeded in interesting Temple and Workman, the pueblo's pioneer bankers and real estate holders, in the possibility of making their sleepy village a rival of San Francisco by way of this Panamint mint. Perfectly logical. Hadn't San Francisco grown from 80,000 to 140,000 population largely on the calories and vitamins of the Comstock in thirteen years? Here was the opportunity for Los Angeles to grow from its 8,000 to 80,000. All it needed to do was to build a railroad from Shoo Fly Landing, below the bluffs of Rancho Santa Monica y San Vicente through Los Angeles and the neighbor-



ing Mojave desert to a point west of Panamint where a good wagon road would automatically start Panamint's millions funneling down into Los Angeles.

Temple and Workman were bankers. They owned a great deal of land. So did Harris Newmark, who also had a store which supplied numerous ranchers with necessities, and bought their grain and wool. A few lesser men also thought it would be a good idea. They all gave Raines encouragement. They even started a subscription list for a wagon road to Panamint.

But Los Angeles had never had a boom. San Francisco had had half a dozen. Los Angeles was cautious. San Francisco was reckless, and glad of it.

And so, after all, it was one of San Francisco's millionaires who had made his fortune in mining supplies and real estate, who gave the next fillip to the Los Angeles-Panamint transportation scheme. Colonel Robert S. Baker, associated with E. F. Beale, a former surveyor-general who had acquired vast land holdings south of Bakersfield, purchased the Spanish grant of the Rancho Santa Monica y San Vicente, including 38,000 acres of the area between Los Angeles and the sea. Colonel Baker and Mr. Beale interested Mr. Temple in a plan for a railroad from the ocean front of their ranch, through Los Angeles, across the Mojave to Independence, the county seat of Inyo County, and on to tap the Union Pacific at Ogden. It would pick up the millions of Panamint, Cerro Gordo, and less pretentious camps en route. Inyo's Assemblyman James E. Parker introduced a franchise bill in the legislature and saw it passed. It granted the proposed railroad right to collect eight cents a mile from passengers, and ten cents a ton mile for freight.

The Union Pacific junction at Ogden would provide vast quantities of freight and countless passengers at the northern end of the line. The bank of Temple and Workman would

be the logical depository for all the millions flowing through Los Angeles.

Men promoted railroads as readily as they now promote new religious cults, or cure-alls for economic headaches. And they found the federal government ready to assist, with gifts of alternate sections of land along the right-of-way, and other subsidies. Baker and Beale and Temple knew how the Stanford-Huntington-Crocker-Hopkins syndicate had recently cleaned up many millions in cash and acquired many hundred sections of valuable land through the promotion of the Central Pacific Railroad to connect Northern California with the East. Why shouldn't Southern California have a similar connection?

Baker and Beale had the prospective ocean terminal. Senator John P. Jones had a fortune estimated at \$20,000,000. He also had a great antipathy to the Stanford-Huntington-Crocker-Hopkins group and was arousing equal antipathy on their part by urging the taxation of their federal land grants. He had colossal ambition, extending to the creation of a desert empire for which he already had engineers in the field studying reclamation projects. He could be made to see that Panamint would be a great feeder to the suggested railroad.

Baker financed a trip to Washington for Raines to convince Senator Jones. And a few weeks later \$113,000 of Jones money paid for five claims in Panamint.

That was spendable money, the first of any importance ever brought into the Death Valley region. More, it was an accolade conferred by a practical, successful, famous potentate of mines and mining upon the aspiring Panamint. As one man its population of prospectors, miners, gamblers, fugitives, saloon-keepers, freighters and what-not, already numbering nearly one hundred, arose from its knees, and with face alight shouted the challenge of knighthood to the world. And the world took heed—at least the western world of gold and silver

extending from Weaverville in the Trinity Mountains of California where Jones had started his successful career in a grocery store, to the Comstock in Nevada, and down and beyond the Mother Lode to Inyo's Cerro Gordo, and on to Los Angeles and San Bernardino, and east and north again into Pioche and Eureka and similar camps of Nevada.

A thousand men turned their mules, their burros, their own plodding feet toward the rim of Death Valley. The nearest stage line, over 250 miles of rocky road from Carson City, ended at Owens Lake. From there a badly distorted trail led through the crooked pass between the Inyo and Coso Mountains, over the torturous Argus Range, down into the sink of Panamint Valley, and up the precipitous crevice which opened upon Surprise Canyon, and Panamint.

The bold and the bad men from the San Francisco region could travel over the Southern Pacific Railroad, building southward, as far as Delano. From there a fairly comfortable stage would carry them over a passable road to Bakersfield, and from Bakersfield another stage would take them to the Owens Valley, whence they could do their own seventy-five miles of foot or muleback to their goal. It was even worse and farther from Los Angeles across the Mojave Desert and over the Slate Range.

Or from the opposite direction, east and north, from Pioche, Nevada, for example, where men were men and whisky was designed to make them tougher, it was three hundred miles to Panamint, by the course that men and burros took. There wasn't even a trail there, but there was a route by which a man conscious of the advisability of finding new fields for his peculiar talents might make his way by installments of twenty to fifty miles between water holes.

Among the men who thus defied Death Valley and the surrounding deserts, or the ropes and guns of irate citizens and local officers, a few should be named as representative.

They brought a blaze of color to the rim of the Panamints which even yet reappears at sunset almost every night of the year, and frequently is reflected above the Black and Funeral Mountains on the other side of Death Valley. That may not be the meteorological explanation of the blazing color scheme that frequently paints the sky above the valley, but it comes logically to mind when one tries to describe the high life of the camp of Panamint.

Among those who contributed was Dave Neagle, who had recently shot a fellow hombre in Pioche, and was rarin' to go. Although only twenty-seven, Dave had accumulated a reputation throughout the desert, and tried not to let it rust in Panamint. He did pretty well at that too, but achieved even wider notoriety some years later in Bodie, Tombstone and Butte, the three toughest camps after Panamint. "Reformed" by those experiences but with trigger finger and reputation, such as it was, more or less intact, he obtained a job as bodyguard for Mr. Justice Stephen J. Field of the United States Supreme Court during one of Mr. Field's visits to the scenes of his California successes. The Justice's friends suggested a bodyguard because David S. Terry, also a former judge, a firebrand and a killer of the California gold rush and Comstock days, had lost a suit before Judge Field. Terry had married his client in that suit, the beautiful Sarah Althea Hill, once the toast of San Francisco, when he had failed to convince the jurist that Sarah was entitled to conjugal rights in the vast estate of William Sharon of Comstock and Bank of California fame. But the lovely bride could not quite soothe the bruised dignity of the fiery Southerner, and Terry had threatened to shoot the jurist. He had already killed David Broderick. So it seemed quite logical when Neagle encountered Terry in a restaurant where Field was dining, and read a threatening gesture into one of Terry's movements, that he should end all future movement with a .44 slug. With a

United States Supreme Court Justice involved, that incident carried Neagle's fame into the press of the nation. But he really got his start in Pioche and Panamint.

There was Pat Reddy, also, the Earl Rogers and William Fallon of the mining camps when Rogers and Fallon were only recently released from diapers. Pat had had one arm shot off in a little affair, but he could still wave the remaining arm in most convincing gestures under the noses of jurors. His brother Ned had started a gambling joint at Cerro Gordo, where he was one of the first to hear of Panamint. Ned, straightway moved his faro layout to Panamint. It took no time at all for such an observant man to recognize an excellent opportunity for a competent criminal lawyer. So Pat made a journey of investigation from the county seat at Independence where the trials must be held if either of the litigants survived and had any money. Pat wasn't precisely a pioneer of Panamint, but he was in and out, looking for and always finding evidence of "self-defense," and a little something on the jurors.

Good prospective clients who had arrived before Pat included John Small and John McDonald who had come all the way from New York to the camp of Battle Mountain, Nevada, and thence worked their way on stolen horses, with supplies purchased out of the profits of stage robberies, over several hundred miles of desert sink and mountain to Panamint. With no bank yet there to rob, and no stage to stick up, they amused themselves momentarily by prospecting. They even went so far as to locate a rich ledge of silver. Then they waited, certain that victims would arrive as soon as Bart McGee and his associates completed their toll road. And soon they welcomed Pat Reddy, riding on the first wheels ever to climb Surprise Canyon.

In the dusty wake of Pat Reddy's buckboard and two mules in the early summer of 1874 came the usual variety

of citizens and citizenesses who make a new mining camp. There was Jacob Cohn with a stock of blankets, overalls, shirts, and shooting irons. There were Harris and Rhine from Independence with a similar stock in addition to some groceries. There was the ancient Uncle Billy Wolsesberger who had peddled gimcracks for nearly a quarter of a century in every lively camp from Red Dog to Mariposy and from Hangtown to Battle Mountain. Known through hundreds of miles of desert and mountains as "Uncle Billy Bedamned," he felt that he would meet numerous tolerant old customers in the new silver camp. He had no intention of missing it even though he had to prod his pack-burro 417 miles from Eureka to get there. In Panamint he was to meet the competition of Mrs. Zoblein with a stock of needles and thread and buttons, and an optimistic supply of piece goods, but he was accustomed to meeting competition and surviving it.

The eminently respectable Miss Delia Donoghue arrived with the necessary equipment to establish a restaurant for the Panaminters. Charles King put in a meat market. John Schober brought the most essential part of a sawmill—the saw. Of course there was already almost enough whisky available in assorted kegs, jugs and bottles on temporary bars buttressed with poker and faro tables and flanked by six-guns.

By this time Panamint had almost all the essential features of a rip-snortin' camp. And very soon the well-upholstered and thoroughly experienced Martha Camp arrived with a bevy of handmaidens to supply another of those delights. The final necessity arrived soon after the triumphal entry of Martha and her girls. It was in the form of a printing outfit and hand and head power in the person of T. S. Harris sufficient to produce a four-page newspaper. The *Panamint News* completed Panamint's self-assurance. Well—almost completed it.

The actual peak of satisfaction was attained with the ar-

rival of Senator John P. Jones, the true angel of the camp. Jones' delay had been due to the fact that he was laying a golden highway of publicity on which Panamint expected to speed to greater riches than the Comstock. No promoter had ever displayed a greater variety of interests—and backed them with his own money. He had purchased a great hotel in New York. He had invested in an ice-making patent and established plants from Georgia west. He had bought mines in Arizona and Oregon. He had acquired 120,000 acres of tidal lands north of San Francisco Bay and planned the building of a \$200,000 system of dykes to assure drainage and reclamation. He had envisioned what, seventy years later, was to become Hoover Dam and had put engineers to work upon the plans. He had put \$113,000 cash into circulation in Panamint when the camp had only a hundred population. He had purchased an interest in Baker's and Beale's Rancho Santa Monica y San Vicente, with its potential ocean-front railroad terminus. He had subscribed \$200,000 for the proposed railroad from Los Angeles to Independence which might extend a spur to the entrance of Surprise Canyon. He had interested his friend and fellow solon William Morris Stewart of Nevada and Washington.

Bill Stewart had recently been displaced by Bill Sharon as U. S. Senator from Nevada. He still had a lame-duck session to serve, but at the moment he had more time and less money than he had had for twelve years. Jones had had little difficulty in convincing him that Panamint was the place where he could occupy the one and regain the other. Both Stewart and Jones were aware that Panamint had been discovered by fugitive desperadoes, highwaymen and killers. But Stewart in his capacity of attorney in Virginia City had met such men before. He had also met the Wells Fargo officials whose stages they had robbed, and whose drivers and messengers they had murdered. He knew by experience and practice that there

could be greater profit in compromise than in force, though he was not entirely averse to the latter. He was the perfect partner for John P. Jones, who was as competent a miner as Stewart was a lawyer.

The more conservative residents of the camp told Bill Stewart just how tough it was. There had already been half a dozen shootings, some local robberies, and stick-ups along the trails. Yes, said Stewart, he knew about that. He had a plan.

It was well that he had. For by the time he got to the Wells Fargo company to ask for an express line into Panamint, the reputation of the camp had convinced even that daring treasure-transportation agency that Panamint business was too hot to handle. When Wells Fargo declined to extend its express service into a new mining camp in those days, it was news. Panamint's reputation soared. Stewart and Jones were disappointed but not thwarted. Eventually they solved the problem of getting their silver out to the mint by casting it into balls of a quarter-ton each. That proved a greater disappointment to the highway gentry than Wells Fargo's refusal had proved to Stewart and Jones. The bullion moved out safely in a freight wagon, without guard.

But prior to that, Stewart had displayed his versatility in another little deal which gave to the partners one of the richest claims in the district. It will be recalled that Small and McDonald had done a bit of stage robbing on their way into Panamint.

That particular hold-up had a denouement which is unique. The sole duty of the Wells Fargo express messenger was to protect the treasure consigned to his care. He knew that before he took the job. So, if he was killed in the performance of that duty, as a number of them were, it was just too bad. But the duty of the company was to deliver the treasure to the consignee. Wells Fargo had grown rich and highly re-



spected by doing just that. A secondary, and more painful duty, was to deliver the value of the package when and if a murdered messenger was unable to carry through. It then became the duty of the Wells Fargo detective force, first to recover the stolen treasure or its equivalent, and second, to discourage the bandits from further depredations.

It was precisely such a chain of events and duties that led James Hume, Wells Fargo's chief of detectives, Sheriff Gilmore of Eureka County, Nevada, and Sheriff Moore of Inyo County, California, up to the brink of Death Valley. Jim Miller, shotgun messenger, had been murdered while resisting a hold-up in Eureka County. The bandits got away with \$4,462.64 from the express box, but not until the driver had recognized them as John Small and John McDonald. More slowly than Small and McDonald had departed from that scene, word filtered back to Eureka that they were happily located in Panamint; that they were in fact owners of one of the camp's best ledges.

Wells Fargo offered \$2,000 apiece for their capture. No one seemed to want to ride all the way to Panamint for that small change. So Jim Hume set forth himself, putting a little pressure on Sheriff Gilmore and Sheriff Moore en route to provide himself with company. Word of their approach came to the attention of Small and McDonald, when they saw a posted notice of the reward of \$4,000 for their capture. It came to the attention of Bill Stewart, who, having been attorney for Wells Fargo in similar situations, knew that Jim Hume's first duty was to recover the stolen treasure, or cash of equal value. And Bill Stewart's first duty, to himself, to John P. Jones, and to Panamint, was to acquire the best of its potential mines, and promote the general prosperity.

So, by the time the minions of the law and Wells Fargo arrived, Stewart had made some arrangements. Small and McDonald didn't want to go to jail. Like all property owners

they were becoming conservative. Dave Neagle felt the same way about it. He had financed the two for a little while after their arrival, and claimed a grubstake right in their silver ledge.

In such circumstances negotiations were simple. Small and McDonald agreed to accept \$12,000 from Stewart for their mine. Hume agreed to accept \$4,462.64 for Wells Fargo's share, and let by-gones be by-gones. Dave Neagle agreed to accept half of the remaining \$7,437.36 for his grubstake. Gilmore and Moore agreed that they had never wanted to take Small and McDonald on a long and lonely personally conducted tour of the desert. Besides, the late Jim Miller had taken the messenger job with his eyes wide open; so, in a way, his death was his own fault, and should not call for a dangerous journey for others and an expensive trial for Eureka County.

Everybody was happy. The first important mining camp in the West to be founded upon discoveries made by professional criminals in flight from justice seemed to have justified itself. Gunplay in the camp, and stick-ups in Surprise Canyon as the stages and freight wagons rolled in, increased with increasing population and prosperity.

Senators Jones and Stewart consolidated their holdings, built a mill, and proceeded to turn out their 500-pound balls of silver.

Death Valley, though east of the main trails into the roaring camp upon its western ramparts, had seen more traffic in two years than in all the years preceding. It had taken its toll of the wayfarers, though not such a heavy toll as had its small rival, Panamint Valley, on the west. William Wilson, a veteran prospector, had died beside a hot and sulphurous spring in Panamint Valley. Jacobs, Stewart and Kennedy had found the skeleton of Alvord. V. A. Gregg, himself near death from heat and thirst, had found the dry bones of a human

leg in an alluvial wash on the Panamint side. Oscar Muller, a Panamint saloon keeper, hurrying back to take care of the Fourth of July trade after a trip out, was found face down in the sand, with fingers torn by mad digging for water. Albert Quigley, a miner, died in the same way on the same day.

But Death Valley could wait. What was Panamint, or the Panamint Valley but a flash in the pan beside the vast cauldron of Death Valley? Those hundreds of men, and few score women, perhaps three thousand in three years, who had gone into Panamint so eagerly or so furtively, would be coming out again if they didn't die in their beds, or their barrooms, or their shack-lined streets, or bandit-lined canyon roadways. Death Valley could wait.

Panamint City lasted only three years. In the summer of 'seventy-five, Comstock shares crashed again on the San Francisco exchange. Then came the crash of the Bank of California, the sudden death of its guiding spirit, William Ralston. Panic gripped the Pacific Slope. The Temple and Workman bank, chief financial institution of Southern California failed. Workman committed suicide. The projected Los Angeles & Independence Railroad folded up its blue prints and vanished in the thin air from which it had come. Distant Virginia City burned to the ground, and its smoke cast a shadow over Panamint, three hundred miles away. Mining and milling companies with an authorized capitalization of \$86,000,000 based on Panamint found no buyers for their stock certificates.

Jones and Stewart were crippled, though they allowed no one to suspect it from their faces or their exuberant manner of living. They had their silver ledges and their mill turning out solid silver cannon balls. But Panamint ore was as tough as its residents, and its reduction to coin silver was as costly as its transportation. Also, its ledges were not proving to be quite so deep as the world had been promised. Outside

money was not coming in any more. The hangers-on were leaving. Many colorful and some important citizens were leaving. The voluminous Martha Camp and her dizzy damsels departed.

T. S. Harris, publisher of the *Panamint News*, printed an editorial which was a masterpiece of euphemism, explaining that he was moving his newspaper westward to Darwin merely because the newly rising camp of Darwin was more centrally located than Panamint. He added that as soon as all the available ground in Darwin was taken, the return migration to Panamint would begin. That was in October, 1875. All the available ground in Darwin has not yet been taken. So Editor Harris cannot yet be accused of misrepresentation. He was an excellent type of mining-camp editor. At last, after doing his part in and for Darwin and Bodie, and subsequently shooting his own managing editor of the *Evening Republican* in the conventional city of Los Angeles, he wrote his own obituary—"I have had a great time!" He put the exclamation mark in the form of a .44 slug in his own brain.

In the meantime, as if the glut of silver on the world market, the Pacific Coast panic of 'seventy-five, and the demoralization of John P. Jones' wide-flung promotional and financial empire, were not enough, Death Valley itself struck a staggering blow. Sending up its great column of superheated air it brought the rain clouds rushing to fill that low pressure area. It snagged the vast bags of water open on its mountain rims, and turned loose such floods as the desert had not known in many a year. It played no favorites. It ravaged Eureka, two hundred miles from its northern end. It drowned thirteen Chinese in one camp. It well-nigh destroyed the dying city of Panamint, carrying abandoned and occupied buildings, and even occupied graves, in a mad rush of water and rolling rock and broken lumber and household furnishings and merchandise into the narrow gorge below, where it

tumbled, some fifty feet deep, through that tortured canyon.

There was no road left to Panamint. There was little left to justify the building of a road. Even John Small and John McDonald, who had financed their final departure from Panamint by trussing up four of the remaining leading citizens in Harris & Rhine's emporium and looting the safe of \$2,300, were broke. It was an irritating situation. To ease the irritation, McDonald shot Small.

Death Valley had had its little joke. But men are stubborn animals—especially desert men.

Among those who had been toughened by the heat of the valley's summer sink, and tempered by the chill of its winter's rim of snow, were Isadore Daunet and five associates, who had not done too well in Panamint. Three of the six were to do better in the pit of Death Valley. The other three were to die there.

Their experiences paved the way to another story—to truths about Death Valley which had never been suspected.

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## CHAPTER VI



### NOT GOLD, BUT BORAX

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THE truth is that Death Valley was never a land of gold, or even a land of silver. The lure of the lost Gunsight and the lost Breyfogle, the high excitement and low production of Panamint City, the legends of Death Valley Scotty to the contrary notwithstanding, Death Valley's rightful position in a practical world has been based not upon gold, but upon borax. Unique scenery, strange tales, winter climate and good roads have contributed in later years.

All the gold that has ever been mined in the Death Valley slopes might be hoarded without greatly distressing any authorities. All the silver produced there might be buried in one Tonopah mine without even causing that mine to be reopened. All the copper would not carry 1,000 volts of electricity from Hoover Dam to Los Angeles.

But the borax has been contributing dozens of items of value to civilization through sixty years. It has made commercially practical a smooth, lustrous, stain-resisting glaze of the world's fine potteries and ceramics. It has contributed to the making of much of the common glass produced throughout the world in that period. It has aided immeasurably in the art and practice of brazing and welding. It made nickel-plating a cheap, quick and practical process. In metallurgy it has had a prominent part in the production of numberless

alloys. Borax helps to prepare hides for tanning. It is used in the manufacture of rayon fabrics, and in the preparation of raw silk for weaving. Your playing cards, and most glazed papers have borax in their coatings. It plays an important part in the preparation of medicated bandages, antiseptic solutions, and cosmetics. In combination with other fertilizing agents it supplies to exhausted soils an ingredient of plant nutrition needed to eliminate "heart-rot" in the sugar beet, "top-sickness" in tobacco, "tip-burn" in lettuce, and "cork disease" in apples. It enters heavily into the composition of enamel, and having thus made possible most of the bathtubs and washtubs in the world it is prepared to fill them with cleansing suds.

Versatile and interesting stuff, borax. Besides helping to make all the other things mentioned, it helped far more than gold to make the history of Death Valley.

Isadore Daunet was the first man to find it there. Daunet, an expatriate Frenchman, with five disappointed friends, abandoning Panamint City to seek a mine in Arizona, climbed over the hump east of their dying town and descended into Death Valley. They made one error. They forgot it was summer. Three of the party died in the ground afire. Daunet and the two others, with the help of friendly Indians finally reached the new camp of Darwin, thirty-odd miles from Panamint in the direction opposite to that in which they had started.

At the moment Darwin was attracting a large part of Panamint City's disillusioned inhabitants. One William D. Brown, a practical mineralogist and mine appraiser, had announced to the world through a location notice recorded in the Inyo county seat of Independence a new discovery of silver ore. His brother Bob had taken up some claims also. One Rafael Cuervo, of the group of Mexicans who had been taking a little gold out of the camp of Coso through a few

lean years, was there first. But Rafael had neglected to record his location.

The result was the camp of Darwin, quickly publicized as being the true Gunsight, with surface ores returning a minimum of \$700 per ton. Darwin offered everything that Panamint had offered except the names of Senators John P. Jones and William M. Stewart. It had the additional advantage of being much closer to economic transportation through Owens Valley. It was named Darwin in honor of Dr. Darwin French who had trekked through that region some fifteen years earlier, but failed to note its silver ore.

Almost as soon as the gamblers and stick-up men arrived on the heels of the first locators, Pat Reddy hurried in. He wanted to encourage a camp such as that promised to be, so he laid a pipe line to provide water. Others would provide gunpowder and whisky, and then Pat Reddy could defend them. Quite soon there were twenty saloons on Main Street. Jack Curran, alias John Wilson, who had arrived ahead of the law in Panamint, brought his own law to Darwin. It consisted of two rifles, two six-guns and one shotgun. He grabbed one of the best claims from a startled Mexican and happily named it the Defiance. Pat Reddy made the title stick.

Darwin seemed to have more to give than Panamint. After sixty-odd years it still boasts a population of forty-eight whites, nineteen Indians and five hundred burros. At the same census Panamint had two residents. When Isadore Daunet reached Darwin it had more men and fewer burros. But the men were not interested in some peculiar white crystals that Daunet had brought from Death Valley. The Frenchman drifted away. Several years were to pass before another incident, on the opposite side of Death Valley, was to prepare the way for his return on the trail of those crystals.

Aaron Winters and his wife, Rosie, described to me by men who knew her fifty years ago as a dark-eyed, black-haired,



frail, and rather lovely Spanish girl, were living in a hut, half dugout and half lean-to, in the harsh oasis of Ash Meadows on the California-Nevada line, when this important scene in Death Valley history was enacted.

The poverty-stricken setting is important for its contrast with the comparative wealth soon to be acquired. The curtain rises to disclose a dooryard flanked by a sagging buckboard, and a pool of water in which a few ducks and a pig disport themselves. Upstage a doorway opens into the makeshift shanty. Beneath a fragment of mirror upon one wall stands a box covered with a strip of calico, and bearing empty bottles and jars which once contained Florida water and cosmetics, but are now only sad mementos of happier days to the lovely Rosie.

In their effort to emphasize contrasts the dramatists have neglected to explain that Rosie was really a lady of property. Aaron Winters had wooed and won her upon a ranch near San Bernardino and had taken her to Ash Meadows together with about a hundred head of cattle which served as a dowry.

Ash Meadows could support a hundred head of cattle, provide plenty of beef for the owners, and occasionally sell some for cash to prospectors and other travelers. The dramatists have emphasized mesquite beans and the fact that Rosie had no Florida water.

The rising curtain discloses Rosie preparing the beans for supper, and not very happy about it either. Aaron, twice her age, overalled, bewhiskered, with faded eyes on the ground in the conventional pose of prospector, plods in.

Rosie greets him querulously. How much longer must they live on beans? How much longer must she try to keep a mud hut clean, with ducks and dogs and chickens tracking in from the puddle at the door? How much longer must she go without Florida water and magnesia powder and such-like? When can she have a new dress that will at least be a little

better than the rags of the squaws who are the only women she ever sees?

Now, now, Rosie. Aaron allows that the puddle is good fresh water, and plenty of it, and they're lucky to have it in this desert. Beans is good too. Even mesquite beans. And if Rosie feels so dog-gone upset all of a sudden, why don't she run down a chicken an' have a first rate feed?

All of a sudden? All of a sudden? Anger drives the querulous tone from Rosie's voice and the weariness from her face and figure. It's been a year, a hundred years, a million years, since she saw a white woman and could talk about whether Florida water was better than magnolia balm, and have a new dress, and a hat with face-trimmin'.

You don't need none of 'em, Rosie. Yore plumb beautiful, Rosie. Specially when you get mad. Yore eyes spark like black agate in firelight. Now jest a minute! Jest a minute, Rosie! I'll get 'em for you. Floridy water enough to take a bath in, an' face trimmin', an' dresses, an'—an' canned peaches. Everything. Jest as soon as I get some shippin' ore out o' the ledge. Look at this here. He shows a piece of ore and scratches it with a horny thumbnail to make a gleaming line across its surface.

A man, younger and more vigorous than Aaron Winters, rides to the door of the cabin, and hails.

Light and come in, stranger. Meet my wife, Rosie. I'm Aaron Winters. Have some beans. We got plenty beans. Rosie, cook the gentleman some bacon, an' heat up that corn-bread. We got bacon left, ain't we, Rosie? Now ain't you sorry you didn't run down a chicken, like I said? Comp'ny, an' everything, an' no chicken. We'll ketch one tomorra, stranger. Rosie was jest a mournin' because we never have comp'ny. We're glad to see you. Take some more beans. Take damn' near all of 'em.

The stranger takes some beans. He takes damn' near all

of 'em, an' damn' near all the cornbread, an' Rosie's last three slices of bacon. He repays Rosie with a glance of admiration. He repays Aaron Winters with information. He is Harry Spiller ridin' down from Teel's Marsh an' Columbus Marsh way in Nevada, lookin' for a kind o' mineral they're cashin' in on heavy up there. It lays in big dry lake bottoms or *playas*, white, kind of crystals like a cottonball turned into mineral. They call it borax. Big demand for it. Worth thirty cents a pound. They sell it to plumbers an' blacksmiths an' metal workers for flux, an' to tanneries, an' to factories that make enamel ware. They even make medicine out of it, an' soap. You'd be surprised.

Aaron Winters is more interested than surprised. The desert can't surprise him much any more. He's been there too long. He knows that it can turn up 'most anything, 'most any-time. The only trouble is to recognize the worth of what it hands you. Now how do you know this borax stuff when you see it?

Easiest thing in the world. You jest take a mixture o' alcohol an' sulphuric acid an' pour it on the stuff, an' set it afire. If she burns green, she's borax.

Hmm! Well, it's about bedtime.

The scene has failed to picture a fourth actor who was there. He had no speaking part. He was merely an observer, with eyes to see and memory to record. He told me about it more than half a century later in his comfortable ranch home near Redlands, California. That observer was the boy Lee Yount, who had been sent by his father from the old Manse Ranch thirty-odd miles southeastward across the desert with horses to be pastured at Ash Meadows.

He was familiar with Ash Meadows. When he was nine, and his brother Sam was eleven, they had herded a remuda of horses two hundred miles from Pahrnagat Valley, Nevada, to Ash Meadows with only three water-hole stops on the trail.

The Yount family was coming in with cattle and horses from eastern Oregon to do something about raising five kids at the Manse oasis, two hundred miles from the nearest school—at San Bernardino. The whole outfit, father, mother, children, wagons, horses and cattle, had managed to stick together as far as Pahrnagat Lakes. But the next move to water sufficient to satisfy the stock was across more than one hundred miles of desert to Indian Creek or Indian Spring or Indian Wells, now shown on the map forty-two miles northwest of Las Vegas.

At the first dry camp on that installment of the long journey, the cattle bawled plaintively but finally lay down and submitted to the inevitable. The horses, however, proved so restless that the elder Yount awakened nine-year-old Lee and eleven-year-old Sam at two o'clock in the morning and instructed them to herd the horses on to Indian Creek, a mere matter of seventy-five miles or so. The boys struck out in the darkness, and two days later brought the animals safely to the creek. They had met a man who said he owned the cabin there, and that they should make themselves at home. The next day a four-horse wagon outfit happened to pass—probably the first in many weeks. They found two children, herding a drove of horses, apparently quite self-sufficient, a hundred miles from the nearest known habitation of white men. An incidental scene within the great drama of the winning of the West—but revealing.

The remainder of the Yount outfit drifted in in due time, and the boys continued to herd the horses out on succeeding stages between water-holes to Ash Meadows. That was the sort of youngsters they raised in Nevada in those days. When the children needed more schooling than they could get at home the parents took them into San Bernardino. When the ranch needed more labor than it could afford to hire, the boys went back to do it. That was the way Lee Yount happened to be herding horses at Ash Meadows when Harry Spiller

brought the story of borax to Aaron Winters. He was not much impressed by the scene. He remembers more vividly that he slept warmer than usual that night because he and Spiller combined their blankets and bedded down together in the loose hay at the foot of a stack. It can be very cold at Ash Meadows in winter.

Let us go back to the next scene in the discovery of borax. It is the floor of Death Valley, on a wide white expanse of acres that Aaron Winters had always thought were just plain salt and soda and alkali.

It is a mile or two north of a small oasis where Winters several years earlier had met one Bellerin' Teck, or Tex, who started the first tentative farming there with water ditched from near-by Furnace Creek. Bellerin' Teck has departed. Winters is glad of that. Bellerin' Teck, like some later squatters, assumed that he owned Death Valley. The manner in which he proclaimed that ownership earned him his name. He displayed other characteristics of violence. After he had traded a half-interest in his squatter's rights to a man named Jackson for a yoke of oxen with which to improve his oasis, he ran Jackson out of the country. He kept the oxen. But soon the ground afire gave Teck the hot-foot and ran him out.

Cub Lee grazed some cattle on the present site of the ranch for a season. Cub has been identified under the name of Leander by journalists whose sense of humor responds to a legend that there were four Lee brothers of Indian blood y-clept Leander, Philander, Meander and Salamander. Cub may have been Leander, although no resident of the region ever knew of him as anything but Cub. Certainly he had a brother named Philander, whose name has been preserved in a hundred memories as Phi Lee. Also he had a brother named Alexander, who drove stage out of Darwin when Darwin was a station on the regular stage route from Mojave to Nevada points. They were not

Indians, although they may have had some Indian blood. Phi Lee's many children, born and partly reared on a desert ranch near Resting Springs, were at least half Indian.

At the moment when Aaron Winters was scraping up some white stuff north of Furnace Creek there was no one except Rosie in the immediate background. With their samples they hurried back to camp at the creek. When darkness supplied the next necessity for the test, Aaron poured his mixture of alcohol and sulphuric acid over the mineral and struck a match.

There is a little hiatus in the record here. None of the dramatic historians has troubled to find out where their hero, whose Ash Meadows dugout was two hundred miles or more from the nearest chemist, obtained sulphuric acid and alcohol. One distinguished author recently writing for the Boy Scout trade has reported that Aaron obtained his chemicals in Las Vegas. That would have been all right except for the fact that Las Vegas was not founded until more than twenty years later. I tried without success to identify the source of Aaron's chemicals. The drama goes on, superior to such detail.

Aaron strikes a match in the darkness. Rosie stands a-tremble. Eager. Doubtful. Beautiful. Hopeful. Aaron has promised her so many things so many times, and failed to deliver. This is a tense moment.

Aaron applies the lighted match to the mixture.

"She burns green! Rosie, we're rich!"

I should like to tell you that Rosie went to Hollywood and lived happily ever after in a bath of Florida water, with Antoine to do her hair and Schiaparelli to do her clothes. But at that moment Hollywood was only a feed-corral catering to farmers who drove in from the San Fernando Valley, through Cahuenga Pass, to plead with Harris Newmark and other wool- and grain-buying merchants for more credit.

The best that Aaron could do for Rosie was to give her a whirl in the shopping center of Los Angeles, extending from the Plaza to Second Street, to make a triumphal tour of San Francisco, and then establish her on a desert ranch at Pahrump, only thirty miles from the hated Ash Meadows. She did have a few more dresses and a few more comforts than she had had before. But she did not live long to enjoy them.

Aaron Winters was rich only according to a prospector's standards in the 'eighties. He sold the Death Valley borax deposits to William T. Coleman & Company for \$20,000 cash without even having erected a monument or recorded the location. That was the way such men as William T. Coleman operated in those early days. They were free and easy like, and demonstrating some justified faith in some of their fellow men. William T. Coleman was America's first Borax King, though he was never accorded the title. That was to be awarded a few years later to Francis Marion Smith.

In the meantime let us finish with Aaron Winters, and get the borax business well started in Death Valley. It is not all precisely as the dramatists have arranged it.

Sam Yount, who went in as the first clerk and utility man with the first crew of workers at the Harmony Borax Works, has given me a first-hand oral report which must be close to the truth. He was there. That was fifty-seven years ago, but Mr. Yount still goes to his office in Los Angeles every day, and retains the physical strength and mental agility to take care of his business.

Mr. Yount says that the first samples of borax that Aaron Winters sent to William T. Coleman and Company in San Francisco were not very pure borax. Evidently Winters had not waited to get to Death Valley after the passing of Harry Spiller. He may have picked up something that looked like cottonball on his way to or from the source of his alcohol and sulphuric acid—wherever that was. Probably she burned

green enough to justify sending the sample to Coleman, and to justify Coleman's sending an agent to Ash Meadows to inspect the source.

In the meantime, however, Aaron Winters had remembered seeing similar stuff in Death Valley, and had gone there and made his test with greater satisfaction. He had taken samples with greater care. Thus when Coleman's agent reached Ash Meadows after a long trip over unmarked desert from Columbus Marsh, Winters was doubly primed. He had everything, including a sack of pine nuts, to entertain his second guest in two months.

Sam Yount says the guest must have been R. G. Neuenschwander. He recalls Neuenschwander as the boss at the Harmony Works, and a very efficient and pleasant boss. He is a little indignant at the historians for having given so many honors to so many persons and none whatever to Mr. Neuenschwander.

William Washington Cahill, who joined the borax company some years later than Sam Yount but has been with them ever since, says the field man who made the deal with Winters for Coleman was William Robertson. It is not important. I merely want to give Mr. Neuenschwander the break that Sam Yount thinks he should have.

Coleman's agent brought with him the original samples sent by Winters. He said they were not very good but that he was willing to look at the property. Winters shrugged his shoulders and displayed the later samples—the ones taken from Death Valley. These were better—much better.

How big a deposit of this did Winters have?

Several hundred acres. It had not been surveyed.

How far from Ash Meadows?

Maybe forty miles.

How about roads? Transportation? Water? Fuel? Sources of food and equipment supplies?



No roads. No transportation. Plenty of water near by. Some desert growth for fuel. Nearest source of supplies about 165 miles.

What was Winters' title to the property?

Right of discovery.

"Hmm." The agent turned the white crystals around in the candle light again, touched a piece to his tongue, scraped a piece with his thumbnail, and ate half a dozen pine nuts. "No record of location, huh?" he said. "What would you be selling me then?"

"I'd be sellin' you the secret of where it is, and my right of discovery. You could put up your own location monuments and make your own surveys, and record the location at the county seat, and establish your own title."

"If you show it to me, how do you know I won't jump the claim, since it isn't recorded?"

"I know about William T. Coleman. He's honest. He wouldn't send a crook all the way down here to cheat an old man. All I want is your word, Mr. Coleman's word, that he'll pay me what the property is worth, and I'll show it to you."

"How much do you think it's worth? Remember, before you name a price, you've already said it's 165 miles from any source of supplies, and that you've said there are no roads, no transportation, and not much fuel. Remember, if we undertake to develop this property we will have to spend a terrible amount of money to haul in materials for a plant, to maintain the men who work there, and to haul the product out to some shipping point. One hundred and sixty-five miles across this desert are a lot of miles. It took me twelve days to ride down here from Columbus Marsh with only two pack mules. Just think what it would cost to bring in a boiler and tanks big enough to handle this stuff, and to haul out even one ton of borax."

"I've thought about all that. I been here on the desert for

a long time. I know all about it. I like it, but Rosie don't. But I like Rosie too. I'll show you this deposit and turn it over to you for \$20,000."

The field man grinned, and ate some more pine nuts. "You win, Winters," he said. "You show me this deposit tomorrow, and if it's up to these samples, and if it's as big as you say it is, William T. Coleman and Company will pay you \$20,000 cash for it, if it's clear down in the bottom of Death Valley."

It was Winters' turn to grin. "That's jest exactly where it is, Mister," he said.

"My God! All right. I said we'd buy it if it's up to specifications, and we will. Can we get there tomorrow?"

"If we start before daylight."

"Then it's time for me to spread my blanket."

Aaron Winters received his \$20,000 from W. T. Coleman. Both were honest men. Besides being honest, Winters was shrewd, as a few prospectors come to be shrewd through a lifetime of battling the desert for a living. So when R. G. Neuenschwander brought Sam Yount and a few other white men, and numerous Chinamen, and a huge boiler and some tanks to start the Harmony Borax Works, he found that Aaron Winters had filed on the water rights of Furnace Creek.

"Now, Aaron, do you think that's just exactly square?"

"Yes, Mr. Neuenschwander, I think it's square. I sold you the borax claim. I didn't sell you any water. I didn't have any water to sell."

"But when you told me there was water available here, you implied that it would go with the borax. You knew we couldn't refine cottonball borax without water."

"No, I didn't imply that. You implied it. I didn't figure to hold you up when I filed on the Furnace Creek water. I figured to make me a little ranch. That's pretty good ground down there in the flat south of the works. Best in Death Valley. Not full of salt and alkali and borax like most of it. I

figured I could raise me some hay to sell for your mules. You're goin' to work a lot o' mules, Mr. Neuenschwander. I don't take it quite kindly that you think I'd hold you up. Furnace Creek ain't the only water around here."

"It's the biggest, steadiest supply."

"Yeh; but there's more. There's a spring up just north a mile or so that Bellerin' Tex found. A little ways farther, and closer to the works than this, is another spring. Flows good, only it disappears before it gets down to the flat. It'll supply you all the water you want. You can pipe it down, or ditch it. That's what Bellerin' Tex done here. That's how come I figured on a little ranch to raise you some hay."

Neuenschwander capitulated, and bargained. Possibly Rosie had something to do with the outcome. Rosie didn't care for Death Valley. If she had to live on the desert even after her husband had become rich, she preferred the larger and more comfortable oasis of Pahrump. Aaron released his Furnace Creek water rights for \$2,500.

It was a very reasonable price. Dolph Navares, who eventually filed on the water rights in the more northerly canyon mentioned by Winters, recently refused \$17,500 for them. It is the overflow from Dolph's spring in Cow Canyon that supplies all the water for the Park Headquarters Village.

In 1882 William T. Coleman and Company had everything necessary to start production on a large scale at the Harmony Borax Works. Indians, emigrants, treasure-seekers, gave way to practical business.

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## CHAPTER VII

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### HISTORY IS MADE

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EVENTS beginning two thousand miles from Death Valley had been shaping for fifty-eight years to bring this new development into the ground afire. They had started before a single white man in the world knew there was such a place as the Indians' Tomesha.

Cynthiana, Kentucky, the birthplace of William T. Coleman, was the scene of this strange working of Fate. From Cynthiana came the two men who have done most to make Death Valley a household word throughout the world.

William T. Coleman was born in Cynthiana in 1824. Walter Scott was born there nearly half a century later. Events that shape lives and history were to bring them together, an elderly man and a young boy, in Death Valley.

Coleman was born with tremendous ambition and energy, and not much else. At the age of fifteen he went to work for his uncle, a railroad building contractor in Illinois. The panic of 1839, which closed down half the business and destroyed half the land values in the United States, ended that job. Later he worked for two years in a St. Louis lumber yard, and found odd hours in which to obtain some additional schooling and knowledge of law.

In 1849 he joined an emigrant train for the four months' crossing of the plains to the newly-discovered gold streams of

California. Reaching the booming new settlement of Sacramento he decided that he could make more money by catering to the needs of the gold-rushers than by wielding a pick and pan. He proved his good judgment briefly in Sacramento and in the important placer mining camp of Hangtown.

Within a year he established William T. Coleman and Company to do a general merchandise and commission business in San Francisco. The next year he joined the first historic Committee of Vigilance to hang a few of the Australian renegades and New York "Hounds" who were making life and property rights in San Francisco precarious.

The next year he journeyed to Boston by way of the Isthmus of Panama, and married Carrie M. Page, whom he had met in his boyhood in St. Louis. He made his headquarters in New York until business forced him to go to San Francisco in 1856. He was just in time to be drafted as leader of a reorganization of the Vigilantes inspired by the necessity of cleaning up a revival of gangsterism similar to that of 1851.

The reorganized Vigilantes hanged four men, including the notorious James P. Casey, who had just murdered James King of William, editor of the San Francisco *Bulletin*, and Charles Cora, a gambler who had murdered General Richardson, a United States Marshal.

Coleman's business enterprises were steadily expanding. His reputation for honesty, energy, efficiency and success extended from San Francisco to New York.

In the same year that Coleman helped to hang Casey and Cora, one Dr. John A. Veatch had discovered borax in Tehama County, California. That was the first discovery of borax in the United States. Borax was worth fifty cents a pound in the drug stores which were its retail distributors. The United States was importing \$200,000 worth annually. The Tehama County source was a spring then in use as a bathing resort. Dr.

Veatch, therefore, went out to find a source from which he could produce borax for the trade.

He found it in two hundred acres of mud releasing the rotten-egg odors of sulphuretted hydrogen in Lake County, California. Dr. Veatch interested a friend, Dr. W. O. Ayers. Together they began to count the chickens which were to hatch from those eggs. They sampled the mud and extracted the borax. They figured the mud would produce 638,880 pounds of borax to the acre. Two hundred acres should produce 127,776,000 pounds of borax. They figured that they could produce it and lay it down in San Francisco at a cost of three cents a pound. There should be a profit of forty-seven cents a pound. With 127,776,000 pounds available they should clean up \$60,054,720.

That seemed a nice sum of money. But California was more interested in gold than in borax. Nevada soon became more interested in silver than in anything. It required seven years to develop enough financial heat to incubate those eggs. In 1864 production started. Importations of borax promptly dropped from \$200,000 to \$9,000. The price dropped from fifty cents a pound to thirty cents a pound. Also the cost of laying down the finished product in San Francisco was more than three cents a pound. Still, Drs. Ayers and Veatch and their associates made quite a goodly profit. More important, a new industry was launched in the West. Still more important to this narrative, W. T. Coleman's interest had been attracted.

In those years the world's interest in mining centered on the Comstock Lode, and extended throughout the highly mineralized state of Nevada. Nevada residents went out to look for the new mineral.

William Troup of Virginia City found something white that appeared to answer the specifications. He borrowed a washboiler from a housewife, dissolved his samples with a

thorough boiling and saw them crystalize into pure borax. Fine. Now he knew what it was. So he hurried down to Columbus Marsh, where he and other Comstockers had dug salt for sale to the ore mills, and located some borax claims.

That was where Coleman came in. Coleman had handled some of the Veatch-Ayres product from Lake County. He had money and vision. Coleman went into the borax business at Columbus, Nevada, in 1872.

A vigorous young man named Francis Marion Smith, born in Wisconsin twenty-two years after Coleman had made his first claim for attention in Kentucky, was close upon Coleman's heels at Columbus. Smith was twenty-six years old—a perfect age for effective activity in the Nevada desert of that day.

For five years, working his way west from Wisconsin, Smith had been earning a living in the mining camps of Montana, Idaho, Nevada and California. He had a little money, a lot of energy, some mules, and a remarkable ability to choose the right assistants and trust them to do the work he assigned.

Fuel was a primary necessity in the production of refined borax from the so-called cottonball crude. The cottonballs must be boiled until they dissolved, and released their unwanted ingredients, after which the solution could be left to cool in huge tanks and to crystalize upon iron rods hung within. A difficulty around the *playas* such as Columbus Marsh, was that the desert supplied little fuel. Frank Smith saw an opportunity for himself and his pack trains. He had been selling fuel and mine timbers to other Nevada camps, and owned a number of what were then called wood-ranches. When he learned of the situation at Columbus he purchased another wood-ranch in the mountains ten miles away and made a deal with W. T. Coleman to supply fuel.

He built a comfortable slab cabin with a view over many

miles of desert including Columbus Marsh. Cooking breakfast the first morning after moving into the cabin, he heard the sound of an axe outside. He investigated promptly and found a Mexican busily chopping down pine trees near his door. Smith's protest had no effect. When he seized the Mexican's axe, the man let out a yell that brought two other men on the run.

That was one too many. Smith, unarmed, could not handle three. He said he would have the law on them. They laughed. They knew as well as he that the nearest law was fifty-five miles away at Aurora, and that it wasn't much good anyway. The nearest gun available to Smith to back up his bluff was ten miles away. He left the claim-jumpers in temporary control and went to get it. He found it in Columbus, but could find only four cartridges to fit it. When he returned to his cabin with the rifle and four cartridges, several neatly stacked cords of wood stood in the place of his trees, but the men were gone. His own chopper told him they would be back next day to move the wood to market.

Smith had a better idea. When his chopper had moved out of rifle range to work next morning, Smith settled himself on the hillside with his rifle, just far enough from the wood pile to be out of range of the pistols with which the wood thieves had been armed. When the men appeared and started to load the wood on their mules, Smith called a halt. The men started up the hill. Smith, with only four cartridges, knew that his only advantage lay in his long-range gun. He halted the approach with a shout and gesture, and ordered the men away. They waved their revolvers and cursed, and finally offered to compromise by taking only the wood they had chopped. It seemed a strange idea of compromise to Frank Smith. That was his wood, whether chopped or unchopped, he told them.

They should get out, *muy pronto*. And still cursing, but



never firing a shot, four Mexicans and two helpers drove twenty-one unladen pack mules down the hill and back to Columbus. That was the sort of man Frank M. Smith was in 1872.

Borax-conscious now, he visited Teel's Marsh and gathered samples. When he picked up the chemist's certificate of analysis and found that the crude on which it was made was the purest borate of soda ever discovered up to that time, a new life opened before him.

In Columbus he promptly enlisted two associates, John Roach and John Ryan, who were to live and die in the profitable service of "Borax" Smith. With his brother he organized the firm of Smith Brothers to develop the property and the business. A Chicago company was induced to provide the needed plant, and production started. Refinement of the crude material was simple, but costs were high. Hay and grain had to be hauled twenty-five miles from Columbus, and even there the one cost \$60 and the other \$140 a ton. Fuel and all other supplies were in proportion. Coleman was operating at Columbus with inferior raw material but at lower costs of transportation, supplies and labor.

Between them and the California group which had moved from the original two-hundred-acre mudhole to near-by Lake Hachinhama, they broke the market from thirty to ten cents a pound in car-load lots. In so doing they distributed more and more borax at a price which permitted the world to learn a multitude of uses for what had previously been looked upon chiefly as a drug.

In that feature of history the borax business parallels the oil business. In 1853, six years before the first commercial oil well in the United States was opened by Edwin L. Drake near Titusville, Pennsylvania, a federal Indian agent reported to Washington that oil springs in the Choctaw reservation were proving to be a remedy for all chronic diseases.

Twenty years later the world was learning that the borax deposits of California and Nevada were proving to be an invaluable aid in all sorts of industries. Metallurgy, which was to make a new world and start it rolling some thirty years later, was just beginning to realize its possibilities. Each doing its part, borax and oil made the automobile industry possible. Realization of the many other uses of borax came with its increasing production and decreasing price.

F. M. Smith was out in front to show the world and supply the world. He concentrated on borax. It was not easy. There were transportation troubles and manufacturing troubles, and difficulties in obtaining labor. There were troubles due to claim jumpers, and rival owners, and legitimate competition.

Smith Brothers, working with inspired vision and unflagging energy, solved them. Eventually, defying, suing, buying, settling more than a hundred claims, they acquired sole ownership of the entire Teel's Marsh deposit. With a vision too big for two men—precisely big enough for F. M. Smith—the future borax king purchased his brother's interests. When a considerable part of Teel's Marsh had been worked out he was prepared to purchase part of W. T. Coleman's holdings.

Coleman had been expanding while Smith was concentrating. Borax represented only a fraction of Coleman's varied interests and could be given only a fraction of his time. That was the situation when Coleman's agent made his deal with Aaron Winters.

Almost at the same instant, our friend Isadore Daunet came back into the picture. Daunet heard of Winters' sale of a borax deposit in Death Valley to Coleman. He remembered that he had picked up something of the same kind near where he had seen three friends stricken to death by thirst and heat in Death Valley.

Daunet enlisted Gilbert Clemmons, a San Francisco broker, Myron Harmon, a storekeeper in Darwin, and J. M.

McDonald and C. C. Blanch in his project. They established title to something less than half a section of mineralized land three miles north of Bennett's Well, twenty-two miles south of Aaron Winters' location. They were long miles in that time. A whole day was required to traverse them. The Daunet enterprise was entirely independent of the Coleman business. It began operation a season before Harmony.

Daunet and his associates organized as the Eagle Borax Company. They dug a well at the source of a feeble spring just above the broad white acres of their claims. With sufficient water assured, they freighted in a huge iron boiler, and a dozen thousand-gallon settling tanks. With never a wagon road within 150 miles, that must have cost a great deal of money.

But these men had little practical knowledge of the art and science of refining cottonball borax. Their first shipment of thirty-seven tons was not very pure. It brought them only eight cents a pound. That was about the cost of production and marketing.

Also they found that it was impossible to work in the summer heat of Death Valley. They were forced to stop operations in June and let nature take its course until October. But they did use the intervening time in obtaining a little more information about the chemical process involved in the refining. In their next season they divided a small profit. Daunet celebrated by marrying a French Canadian divorcee named Clotilde Garraul. Of course the bride could not live in Death Valley. *Impossible!* Daunet went back to his borax vats. He spent one more summer season with Clotilde, but when he returned to San Francisco the third time he was greeted by a process server. Clotilde wanted a divorce. Daunet simplified the problem for her by leaping out of the window of his hotel.

The Eagle Borax Works ceased to function. The property came into the hands of Coleman, to be held as a reserve

against the time when the Harmony deposits should be exhausted. It was never worked again. Its ruins can still be seen below the road north of Bennett's Well.

In the meantime the management of the Harmony Works was experimenting with Death Valley's second greatest problem—transportation. Coleman's field men decided that the most practical wagon route between the Harmony Works and a railroad shipping point was down the valley, through Windy Gap, in the lower end of the Panamints, and on across the rolling deserts to the station at Mojave. It was not a road, but it was a route.

The company put fifty Chinamen to work with sledge hammers to break down some of the sharp and crowded pinacles of rock salt where tourists now stop their cars and exclaim, "So this is the Devil's Golf Course! Just imagine chipping a ball out of that rough."

The Chinamen broke down enough of the knife-edged extrusions to give a mule team footing across the valley below Furnace Creek Wash. There was no doubt of its solidity. Borax Smith's scientific curiosity operating through steel drills eventually was to discover that the roadbed was more than one thousand feet thick. Precisely how much more has not been determined. It was Borax Smith's tools, not his curiosity, that stopped at a thousand.

Fred W. Corkill, in the second of three generations of Fred Corkills—Fred, Fred W., and James Fred—to serve the borax business, provides an interesting sidelight on that subject. In his office at the huge modern borax works near Kramer in the Mojave Desert, where he and Roy Osborne are in charge of mill and mine, he told me that he conducted Mr. and Mrs. Frank M. Smith on a tour of Death Valley in 1914. One of his clearest recollections of that trip was the sixty-eight-year-old man's assertion that some day he was coming back with proper equipment and find out just how much more than a thousand feet deep that salty roadbed really

was. He never came back. No one else wants to know, enough to pay the drilling costs.

Down the east side of Death Valley from the Harmony Works, past the newly thriving oasis of Greenland Ranch which was to become most famous as Furnace Creek Ranch, and across the rock-salt of the valley's floor the road started. Southward on the western side of the valley, across the edges of blue-gray alluvial fans from Panamint canyons, and up the long slope of gravel and boulders into Windy Gap, it made a way. South and west another hundred miles, its course determined in part by far-spaced water holes and in part by the barriers of scattered mountains, it wound its way to the railroad at Mojave. The Eagle Works had preferred to extend their wagon ruts more to the southward to the station of Daggett on the new Santa Fe Railroad. The Amargosa Works, over the Black Mountains from Death Valley, were rolling out a way from Amargosa Valley to join the Eagle's route to Daggett.

For the first time, more than half a century ago, Death Valley was linked with civilization by something on which wheels could travel. Men of courtesy called it a road. Borax built it. Where the emigrants, the Gunsight seekers, the Breyfogle fanatics, the solitary prospectors, the fugitive bad-men, and various surveying parties had failed to do more than mark a few pack trails, borax miners opened roads.

There was nothing romantic about the borax men. They were just hard-headed, hard-working, practical men who had found something in Death Valley that the world needed. So they built roads to get it out. Similar men who paid similar attention to their jobs on a hundred frontiers through two and one-half centuries had built the United States.

Organization, business, industry took charge of Death Valley.

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## CHAPTER VIII



### MAN AND MULE POWER

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MEN were put to work to restore and improve Bellerin' Teck's original ditch to carry Aaron Winters' Furnace Creek water upon the fertile bottoms of Greenland Ranch. A 'dobie and slab house was constructed with wide shading porches. Trees were planted—palms and cottonwoods and willows. Alfalfa fields were laid out, planted, and irrigated. Barbed wire fences, strung around to keep out the Indians' burros and other animals, not to mention the Indians themselves, made convenient lines on which the Indians could dry their meat. The Harmony Borax Works were established and started production and shipping.

Before summer came Death Valley was boiling with business. When summer came it boiled over. Something had to be done to employ these men elsewhere.

Aaron Winters again brought the good word. On his ranch at Pahrump, which he had purchased from Charles Bennett, Winters was approached by a man named Parks and a man named Ellis. They brought some soapy white stuff that they had picked up two-days' journey away to the southwest, at a point overlooking the dry bed of the Amargosa River before it looped into the sink of Death Valley to disappear forever.

Could this be borax? Winters told Park and Ellis to come back after dark and he would tell them. As soon as dark

came, he made his test. "She burned green." When the men returned he made them a proposition. First, he would have to see the location and make certain that the deposit was as big as Parks and Ellis said. Then, if Parks and Ellis agreed to divide the proceeds by three, with one-third for Winters, he would undertake to sell the deposit. Parks and Ellis agreed. Winters made a visual survey and carried his samples and information to Coleman's field man. A little while later he had three good checks for \$5,000 each, one made to himself and one to each of the other men.

W. T. Coleman and Company had another borax deposit. You can drive between the ruined 'dobe buildings of that property on the surfaced road between Baker and Death Valley Junction. It was the Amargosa Borax Works. It offered precisely what Coleman needed to keep an important part of his organization at work when the Death Valley temperature was up to 130 degrees and higher and the Amargosa temperature was down to a comparatively cool 110.

Aaron Winters started out to pay his taxes at Belmont, the county seat of Nye County, and to celebrate. Nevada was tough in those days. Just for a joke Winters slipped a broken six-gun into the jockey-box of his wagon, on top of \$1,200. At a station fifteen miles south of Belmont, he put on a little party with liquor and trimmings for two men who were lounging about. The men said they would go on to Belmont with him. The next morning the wife of the station-tender asked Aaron if he had anything he wanted in the jockey-box of his rig.

Yes, he did. He had \$1,200 there.

Then he'd better go and look after it. His friends of the night were hitching up his horses, and she had noticed them investigating the jockey-box.

When Aaron arrived at the wagon, he found both the broken six-gun and his \$1,200 missing. The gun was in the

hands of one of the men, who leveled it at Aaron and told him to go away from there. Aaron slipped his good gun out from under the seat cushion and shot the thief. Then he made the other man put the body in the wagon and walk ahead of the team and the gun which had demonstrated its efficiency, to Belmont.

There was a coroner and sheriff at Belmont. Aaron put the body and the prisoner in their hands. They found the \$1,200 in the pockets of the dead man. When the case came to trial, the prisoner testified that the other man had taken the money. He was protesting when Aaron appeared. Aaron verified that testimony. The court returned his money, and found a verdict of justifiable homicide. Aaron interceded for the prisoner, and finally obtained his release. Later on he hired him as a ranch hand at Pahrump.

Parks had taken his \$5,000 from the sale of the Amargosa deposit and gone to his home in the East. Ellis was spending his portion on booze and gambling and target practice, mostly around Pahrump. He developed quite a reputation as a gunman.

After a time, Ellis got into a poker game at Pahrump with one Jim Center, or Centers, a cook at the Amargosa Borax Works, who had come to the ranch for a spree. The game broke up in a row when Ellis threatened to shoot Center. Center went out to get a gun, and found one in the small arsenal of Henry rifles kept at the store for emergency. When he encountered Ellis in the road, Ellis shot him through the fleshy part of one thigh without touching the bone, and Center dropped behind a flimsy barrier. Ellis shot again, and punctured Center's other thigh. Center answered with a rifle bullet through Ellis' body. Ellis died two days later. Center recovered. Self defense. No arrest. No trial. Pahrump believed in justice, more than half a century ago.

Ed Stiles, who started to familiarize himself with that



country back in 1858, at the age of six months, and is now willing to sit on his front porch on the outskirts of San Bernardino, and talk about it, had something to do with the opening of Death Valley to wheeled transportation. Ed Stiles and his two-year old sister, who was to become the mother of W. W. Cahill, came through that section of desert in a covered wagon from Salt Lake City. They followed the so-called Old Spanish Trail on which Captain Jefferson Hunt led the 'Forty-Niners who trusted him.

The Stiles family settled in San Bernardino, then a Mormon colony. Ed grew into a husky youth, and obtained some schooling, and was back on the desert driving freight teams before he was twenty. He saw Panamint City, and Darwin, and Bodie and Aurora and Virginia City in their prime. He knew every water hole and wagon rut, and passable and impassable canyon in a stretch of desert three hundred miles long, one hundred miles wide, and more than two miles high, extending from Virginia City, Nevada, to Daggett, California.

He was working for Jim McLaughlin, driving a twelve-mule team, hauling machinery from a dismantled mill in Aurora to Virginia City, when McLaughlin informed him that he had contracted to do some teaming for the Eagle Borax Works, just going into production in Death Valley. Instead of making another trip back to Aurora to take another load to Virginia City, Ed should go on from Bishop Creek, where the deal was made, to Lone Pine, and thence to Darwin. From there he could find his way to Postoffice Springs and on to Wingate Pass, originally Windy Gap. Follow northeast through Wingate Pass into Death Valley, and thirty or forty miles north he would find the Eagle Borax Works. It was only a little jaunt of some three hundred desert miles of which about a hundred had never known a wheel. He couldn't miss it. Plenty of other mule-skinners could miss it, but not Ed

Stiles. He didn't, either. He pulled into the Eagle Works with all his mules and wagons clicking.

At Bishop, he had picked up a swamper named Jimmie Dayton. Jimmie was a little man, but quite substantial in his own right. For the information of the uninitiated, if there are any in these days of pulp magazines and motion picture "Westerns," a "swamper" is the first assistant to the mule-skinner. The "skinner" drives the mules. The "swamper" helps to feed the mules and water the mules, and manage the brake on the trail wagon, and cook for himself and the skinner, and wash the dishes, and otherwise make himself useful. That is the way Jimmie Dayton breaks into this narrative. He remains for twenty years and goes out in a blaze of sunshine.

Ed Stiles made four round trips of approximately 250 miles each from the Eagle Works to Daggett, driving twelve mules, hauling borax to the railroad, and hauling feed, and miscellaneous supplies back to Death Valley. On some stretches of the general route he could follow wheel ruts made by earlier wagons going from Daggett to various mining enterprises near the south end of Death Valley. On other stretches he made his own road. He varied the monotony of those trips occasionally by making a harder journey into some mountain valley or desert ranch to obtain supplies for the Eagle Works.

On one of those side trips he encountered a representative of Coleman and Company. He told the Coleman man the route he expected to take across the south end of Death Valley. The Coleman man said it was impossible. The only men who had ever attempted it, and that with an unloaded wagon, had almost lost their entire outfit and had been lucky to get back alive. Having given this friendly warning, the Coleman man went his way. So did Ed Stiles with his twelve mules and his heavily loaded wagons. When the Coleman man

got back to the springs three days later, Stiles was there. Instead of a load of feed and miscellaneous supplies which he had shown three days earlier, he had fourteen thousand pounds of borax.

That was the sort of man and mules that Coleman needed in his business. It wasn't long after that before Stiles found himself working for the Coleman outfit, hauling from the newly opened Amargosa Borax Works. Jim McLaughlin had sold his mules and wagons to the Amargosa Works, and Ed Stiles went with them.

Another skinner with eight mules and two light wagons came into the plant one day while Stiles was there getting his outfit ready for a trip to Daggett. Al Maynard was foreman of the works and J. S. W. Perry was attending to the office work. Maynard took Stiles aside.

"Ed, do you think you could hook up eight more mules with your string, and put on an extra trailer, and handle the whole outfit?"

"Why not?"

"It'll make a long string."

"Yeh."

"All right; if you can do it, go ahead."

"What's going to become of the other driver?"

"I'll take care of him."

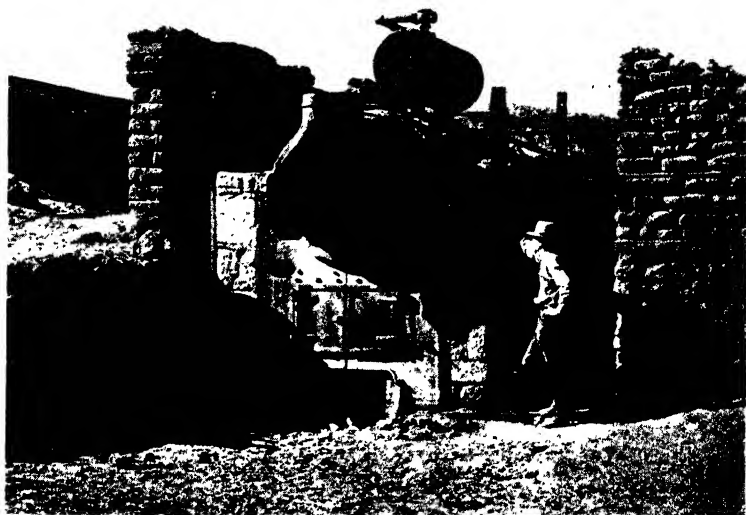
So Stiles hooked up and laid out chains and spreaders for twenty mules ahead of his lead wagon, put a trail tongue instead of a long tongue on the new wagon and coupled it to his own. The new skinner was busy putting his mules through the blacksmith shop. When they met for dinner at noon, nothing had been said to the other driver. When they walked out of the cookhouse, however, he noticed the chains and spreaders laid out for twenty animals ahead of Ed Stiles' lead wagon, and his own wagon coupled behind.

"He didn't say a word," says Stiles. "He just took a good



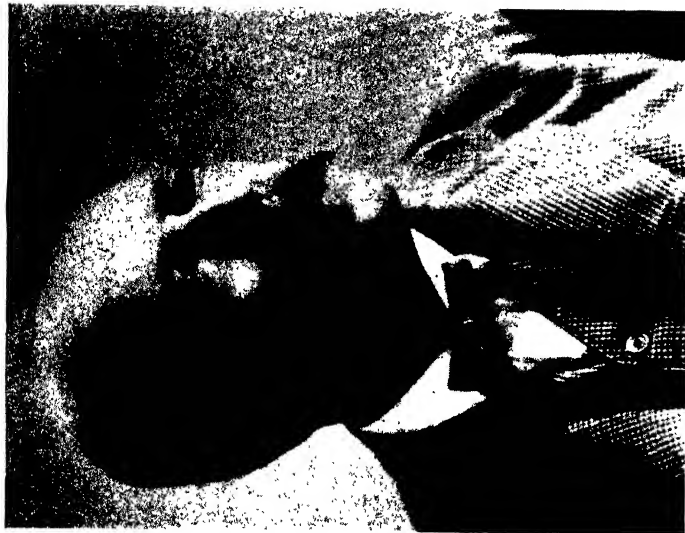
*Courtesy of Mrs. Harry Gower.*

Twenty-mule-team outfit crossing the Devil's Golf Course in Death Valley after its return from the San Francisco Bay Bridge dedication. The floor is rock salt more than 1,000 feet deep.



*Courtesy U. S. Dept. of Interior.*

Ruins of Harmony Borax Works in Death Valley, founded by Wm. T. Coleman & Co., in 1882, acquired by "Borax" Smith in 1886, abandoned when colemanite ore proved more commercially profitable than the cottonball borax gathered from the surface of the dry lakes or playas.



*Courtesy of Mrs. Harry Gouwer.*

John Ryan, 1849-1918, Chief Assistant of "Borax" Smith in the practical opening of Death Valley.



*Courtesy of Mrs. Harry Gouwer.*

Francis Marion ("Borax") Smith, 1846-1931, the man who did most to open Death Valley to the world.

look at that layout, and a good look at me, and went to the office and asked for his time."

That was the beginning of the twenty-mule-team freighting—in 1882. It started, not in Death Valley, but in the Amargosa Valley, some thirty miles to the east. Ed Stiles drove the first twenty, and handled them as effectively as he had handled the twelve.

In the next two and one-half years Ed Stiles jerked and skinned that long-line freighting outfit all around that vast section of the Mojave, Amargosa and Death Valley deserts. When he was not hauling borax 135 miles to the Amargosa's nearest railroad point at Daggett, he was hauling hay or grain from Pahrump or Manse. When he was not hauling hay or grain he was winding that team up unmapped canyons into the Charleston Mountains in Nevada to bring down tremendous loads of lumber. When he was not doing that, he was hauling over the Black Mountains between the Amargosa Works and the Harmony Works. That was a seven-day round trip of 120 miles over a hump nearly a mile high. Incidentally, it was a route that passed within sight of the green-stained rocks which were to attract two thousand men and several million dollars into the making of the head-aching copper camp of Greenwater twenty-five years later.

It might just as well have been a silver camp. Bob Pultz, who was Stiles' swamper after Jimmie Dayton was promoted to the foremanship of Greenland Ranch, came into camp below Greenwater Spring one evening and displayed a piece of rock as big as his fist and as heavy as lead.

"I'm sorry, Ed, but I'm going to quit you." He dug at the rock with his knife, and pointed to the shining metal revealed. "This here's silver. I'm goin' to get me a couple boorows and a outfit, and come back and find the ledge it come off of."

He accomplished only the first two-thirds of that program.

Ed Stiles found another swamper and kept on teaming. When he quit the borax company after two and one-half years he had made history.

He was to pioneer more roads and have a part in more history, but aside from this narrative. When he finally quit the desert he had a piece of good land waiting for him on the outskirts of San Bernardino. The manner in which he acquired that land offers a shining sidelight on the variety of men to be found in the desert. Jim McLaughlin, meeting Stiles in Darwin, had given him a check for \$370 back pay. There was no bank in Darwin, so Ed gave the check to Myron Harmon to get the money from San Francisco. Before Harmon returned to Darwin, Stiles had been transferred to another route. Three or four years passed before he happened to be in Darwin again and met Harmon.

"I s'pose you figured that money was gone for good, Ed," said My.

"I haven't been worryin'. I've had all I needed."

"Well," said Harmon, "I've still got it. When I couldn't find you, I invested it in my business. With interest it comes to \$470. Is that fair?"

"Fair enough, My; and thanks."

My Harmon's business was the Eagle Borax Works, which he had opened with Daunet and three others.

This time, Ed sent the money to his father in San Bernardino, and his father bought a piece of land. Ed Stiles still owns that land.

All the men who followed Ed Stiles on the twenty-mule wagons from Amargosa to Daggett were not so successful as he. Charley Button lasted only two trips. George Plant did only a little better. It was hard, monotonous, lonely work. All drivers did not have Ed Stiles' desert background and good temper. All swampers did not fit into the job as naturally as had Jimmie Dayton. The next driver after Plant, was beaten

to death with a wagon spoke in the corral at Daggett. Bill Pitts, his swamper, was summarily hanged there the next day. Some of the old-timers are not quite certain that the right man was hanged. After that it became customary for the boss to ask a driver at the end of each trip if he wanted to change swampers.

Charles Bennett, who had sold the Pahrump Ranch to Aaron Winters, made a teaming contract with the borax company. When Ed Stiles had effectively demonstrated what could be done with a twenty-mule team, the company decided to buy Bennett's animals, build better wagons, and hook the mules up in longer strings for the Wingate Pass route from Harmony to Mojave. Ed Stiles had given J. S. W. Perry a valuable tip about wagons to be used on the desert. Years before, Ed had gone out into that country with his father in a fine new light wagon, and had seen it literally fall to pieces in the sun and dry air. It was necessary to have wood seasoned in the desert to build a wagon for desert use. Perry laid down a huge supply of ash and hickory in Mojave to season.

When his blueprints were finished they called for wagons with rear wheels seven feet high, front wheels five feet, each with steel tires eight inches wide and one inch thick. The hubs were eighteen inches in diameter, and the oak spokes were five and one-half inches wide at the hubs and four inches at the felloes, which were eight inches wide and four inches thick, reinforced with heavy bolts. The completed wagons weighed three tons each, and could carry a load of ten tons each.

J. T. Delameter, then an experienced desert freighter, now of Burbank, California, built the wagons with skilled labor at Mojave to Perry's specifications. The fact that he built them well may be seen when one examines some of them that are still standing on exhibition at Death Valley Junction, Furnace Creek Ranch and Furnace Creek Inn. They cost



\$900 each, and they were worth it. In five years of steady travel over the rocky roads from Death Valley to Mojave, not one ever broke down. In fifty-odd years of standing in the sun and dry air of Death Valley, they have not fallen apart. Two of them were substantial enough to roll to San Francisco for the great Bay Bridge dedication ceremonies.

By the time they were ready to go into service a number of men had learned the technical details of handling the motive power. Besides Ed Stiles, I have met two other veterans of the 120-foot "jerk line." Frank Tilton, later, and still in 1940, a carpenter in the shop of the Tonopah & Tidewater Railroad at Death Valley Junction, became what might be called a journeyman mule-skinner. Incidentally, the term "mule-skinner" probably is derived from the deft manner in which a driver could flick a bit of skin from the flank of a lazy mule with a twenty-two-foot lash on a six-foot handle. The mules too far out in the string to hit with the lash could be advised of their duties with well-directed rocks. It was a small part of the swamper's duty to keep a supply of the rocks available.

The swamper was seldom trusted to harness the mules. The skinner preferred to do that himself, so that he could inspect the collars and harness and be certain that the animals were in condition to do their work. After putting on the harness while the animals were feeding, the skinner led the leaders and the next two span out to their positions at the end of the long chain and hooked them up. The others would then take their proper place without guidance, and be hooked up in turn. Every animal knew his place. If, by chance, he could not find it, or found another mule in it, he would run around wildly until caught and led into his place. Frank Tilton had one old gray wheel mare that would run around the wagons five or six times if she happened to find another animal in her place, and if not caught would light out for home.

One of the last men to drive a twenty-mule team hooked to borax wagons was Johnny O'Keefe. Johnny lives in Beatty, Nevada. Johnny's acquaintance with mules began in Nevada in the days before Tonopah and Goldfield. By the time the big teams were needed there, before the railroads arrived, he was an expert. When Rhyolite started to boom in 1905, Johnny was on the job. Thirty years later he seemed the logical man for the borax company to put on the job of driving twenty mules over the new San Francisco bridges and back to Death Valley. Although water and feed were handier on that journey than they had been on the original route of similar teams and the same wagons, it was a more difficult journey, in a way.

When the company organized its own freighting business between Death Valley and Mojave it used the same string of mules to and fro over each twelve- to twenty-mile section of the route. Mules are great creatures of habit. Frank Tilton tells me—and Frank Tilton knows mules—that after a team had traveled back and forth over a few miles of road half a dozen times, there was little left for the driver to do except to take care of his brakes.

But Johnny O'Keefe's twenty were on unfamiliar ground between San Francisco and Death Valley. They had had a lot of training, but they had to be informed when it was time to do their special stuff in turning a corner. Johnny informed them with whip and tongue—sometimes hardly distinguishable. To make a left turn, he pulled steadily on the 120-foot cotton-rope line which ran through rings on the harness of all the nigh mules to the bit of the nigh leader. The leaders turned left. If he wanted to make a right turn he jerked the line with sharp short jerks.

The manner of training is interesting and ingenious. The pull naturally drew the nigh leader's head to the left, and an attachment to the left side of his partner's bit, pulled him the

same way. So they turned. A jerk made the nigh leader instinctively throw up his head. That pulled a strap attached to the right side of the bits, and moved both leaders to turn right.

The next six or seven pairs followed automatically. By the time the wagon neared its point of turning, a lot of power was being applied at an angle to pull it off the road. To overcome that difficulty, the pair known as pointers or sixes, occupying the third position from the wagon, and the pair immediately in front of the wheelers, designated as the fours or swing, had to align themselves on one or the other side of the chain, depending on left turn or right turn, and throw themselves into the job of keeping the wagon comparatively straight until it reached the point of the turn. To do that on a sharp curve they had to pull furiously at an angle to the rest of the team, and step sidewise at the same time. Quite a trick. It should be seen to be appreciated. The pointers were trained to it by individual attention, supplemented by word and name until they knew what to do at the command of the driver.

The driver rode the nigh wheeler, and handled the brake of the lead wagon with a stout rope attached to the long brake lever. The swamper rode the rear wagon and handled its brake. Once in a while on a familiar easy stretch of road, the driver might mount the lead wagon, just for a change of posture.

It was a well-trained team that Johnny O'Keefe drove to and from San Francisco, but Johnny had to keep driving all the time. The old familiar desert roads had their advantages. It was a ten-day trip from Mojave to the Harmony Works. Water and feed had to be hauled out to the dry camps established between far-separated springs. Distances between camps were also determined by the difficulties of the terrain.

It was fifty miles from Mojave to Blackwater, the first spring sufficient to provide water for twenty mules and two

men. That meant two dry camps, for which water had to be hauled in the trailing tank wagon. Only six miles beyond Blackwater was Granite Well. Beyond that there was a sector of twenty-six miles to Lone Willow Spring which could not be covered in a single day and required another dry camp. Beyond Lone Willow were fifty-three dry miles to the first potable water in the southern end of Death Valley. The dry camps were provided with reserve water tanks to be filled from the trailing tank wagons. Reserves of hay, and grain in rat-proof bins, were also established. There was some blacksmithing equipment at each camp for emergency work upon a mule which might have cast a shoe, or upon a loose or broken piece of wagon-iron. Those skimmers and swamper had to be versatile men. The skimmers drew from \$100 to \$120 a month, and the swamper drew \$75. They slept at night on the ground within reach of the mules tied to open mangers, where they could do what might be needed if the mules tangled. They provided their own grub on the road, consisting largely of beans, bacon, bread and coffee, with whatever canned goods they could find in Mojave and pay for after their session with the faro table. "We didn't care much for gimcracks, but we're hell on grub. The gimcracks don't stay by ye."

Most of the men celebrated return to Mojave from a three weeks' round-trip to Death Valley by getting drunk. Those who preferred to lose their money at faro could do that. Some did both. They were ready to start back to Death Valley next day. They seldom drank on the road. They were too busy, and besides it was dangerous. They could die on that road without whisky.

John R. Spears, who is responsible for the quotation with reference to food and gimcracks, noted a grave marked W. M. Shadler in Wingate Pass in 1891. J. T. Delameter, who helped to lay Shadler in that grave, says, "It was twenty-eight days

before we found him, and he was mummified. No odor from his body, and when we stood him up he almost stood alone. Now he was a good man and a martyr to Death Valley."

Life and death were as close together in the days of the twenty-mule-teams opening of Death Valley in the 'eighties as they had been in the days of 'forty-nine.

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## CHAPTER IX

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### BORATE DESTROYS HARMONY

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**G**REENLAND RANCH was really blossoming in the pit of Death Valley in 1885. Jimmie Dayton had a fine big team of Norman horses which could do more work in a day than Bellerin' Teck's ill-gotten yoke of oxen could do in a week. The only trouble about the horses was that they were so big and Jimmie was so small he had to climb on a box to hook their collars and adjust the hames.

Alfalfa fields grew rich and rank under Jimmie's management. A new crop of hay could be cut every six weeks. Cattle and hogs and sheep could be pastured during the working season to supply fresh meat for the Harmony borax crews and skimmers and swamper.

Washington palms were growing happily, and the cottonwoods and willows were gaining strength and height. A species of tamarisk known as athol was waving its green plumes higher and wilder each season. Greenland Ranch was quite a lovely place, a blessed relief from the glaring white wastes of most of the valley's floor.

The borax company was doing very well. It had learned that Chinese coolies, engaged and fed under contract by a so-called Boss Chinaman would pick up a lot of cottonball borax in a day at a wage of \$1.25 in their first season, increasing twenty-five cents a day in each subsequent season. Chinese laborers were delighted to get that much money in California

in the 'eighties. They would cheerfully perform labor which no white man would endure.

The white men were willing to drive teams hauling in the mesquite and other desert growth to stoke fires under the great boiler, or to drive wagons loaded with crude borax by the Chinamen. So came the recording of one Walter Scott as a resident of the Death Valley which he was eventually to publicize to a credulous world.

Lee Yount, who was there, driving a fuel wagon, at the age of fourteen, tells me that Walter Scott also was there, driving a crude borax wagon. Sam Yount, two years older than Lee, who was also there as time-keeper and utility man, verifies the statement.

But something more important than Walter Scott happened to Death Valley in 1886. That other Kentuckian, William T. Coleman, who had opened the valley to wheeled transportation, was forced into bankruptcy. Coleman was a noteworthy man. In addition to earning himself an enduring name in the development of the West, he had gained national recognition as a man of honor and accomplishment. Charles A. Dana, famous editor of the famous *New York Sun*, had put forward his name and supported him for the presidential nomination in 1884. His business interests extended from Alaska to Death Valley, and from San Francisco to Europe.

He was sixty-two years old when his great organization crashed. A receiver in bankruptcy paid all creditors forty cents on the dollar promptly, and Coleman himself paid the remainder before his death in 1893. In the liquidation of the Coleman company assets, F. M. Smith acquired the borax properties and set out to earn the title of Borax Smith.

In the meantime men had discovered that borax occurred in other forms besides the cottonballs which could be dug from dry lake beds. Harry Spiller, Phi Lee and Billy Yount discovered a white hill in the Black Mountain mazes just

south of Furnace Creek wash. They tried the classic test and were rewarded by a bright green flame. They named the hill Monte Blanco and sold it to the company for \$4,000. You can find it on a one-way detour through Twenty-mule Canyon or Corkscrew Canyon, looping a few crooked miles southward from the Furnace Creek wash road near Death Valley. It has helped to make Death Valley history.

Borates in the mountains? It was a new and exciting idea. Prospectors forgot about the Gunsight and the Breyfogle, and began to look for mountains of borax. Phi Lee and his brother Cub found another mountain on the Amargosa side of Death Valley's eastern wall, from which they carried some samples to Mr. Neuenschwander.

Neuenschwander made his examination. The samples were a hard white glittering substance with the surface appearance of quartz. It didn't take him long to decide that they were a borate of lime, differing from the cottonball borate of soda for commercial purposes chiefly in the necessity of a different method of recovery and refinement. If the Lee boys were right in their estimate of the amount of the deposit, this find might revolutionize the industry.

They were right. Neuenschwander was authorized to buy the deposit. It was named the Lila C. in honor of Lila C. Coleman. The borate of lime ore was named colemanite. The days of grubbing and boiling and crystallizing cottonballs at the Harmony Works and Amargosa Works were soon to end.

Borax Smith organized the Pacific Coast Borax Company with an infusion of British capital. A plant for the refinement of the new product was established at Alameda, California.

Then came Calico. The historic long hauls of the twenty-mule teams ceased abruptly. The Harmony Works and the Amargosa Works were closed. Death Valley was virtually abandoned to its Indians.



Calico is not a part of the Death Valley region but it has a definite, if negative, part in the history of the ground afire. It can be easily and profitably reached by the tourist crossing California's Mojave desert on U. S. Highway 66. Ten minutes, or eight and one-half miles east of Barstow, lies Daggett. When Calico was born with a silver spoon in its mouth Daggett was the nearest railroad station, only eight miles away. It didn't take long to get the needed doctors and nurses over eight miles of desert. Remember that the scene of Panamint City's birth was more than twenty-five times that far from the nearest railroad. Convenience to railroad transportation in the mining of the West was rare and inspiring. Calico took full advantage of it.

Calico was a silver camp, named for the mountains in which it was established. The mountains had already been named for the gaudy display of their colors. They are still gaudy. And the ghost of the camp of Calico is still worth visiting, on a short detour from U. S. Highway 66 or 91.

It was a rip-snorter in its day. Mrs. Faulkner, who was reared and married there, and who now owns the famous, if unimposing, Stone Hotel at Daggett, has told me about it. There were a lot of gay dogs and cute kittens in Calico. There was also a lot of silver.

Calico, and the events it brought about, left Death Valley to simmer on the back of the stove for some fifteen years. Of course the Old Confidence, Tecopa, Ibex and smaller independent mining enterprises were operating intermittently near the southern end of the valley, but regular traffic into the valley proper was suspended. Only a few such prospectors as Doc Trotter and Shorty Harris were active there. Only an occasional prospector's report of finding the body or bones of another prospector brought the words "Death Valley" into the public prints, and added to the legends of its deadliness.

All the itinerant prospectors who had not been doing very

well for a number of years in the Nevada, Arizona, and California deserts, punched their burros into the Calico Mountains. Location monuments were erected so thickly around the original Calico strike that the locators used up a large part of the loose rocks in an extremely rocky country.

Hugh Stevens and Bill Neil were a little late into Calico, but they were optimistic, as all prospectors must be to qualify for the trade. The nearest mineral they could find that seemed worthy of a monument were some white crystal-like outcroppings five miles, as the raven flies, from Calico proper. They proved to be a fine grade of colemanite such as had already been located but not opened in the Lila C. The Lila C. was more than ten times as far from the railroad.

The Pacific Coast Borax Company promptly bought the Calico property. The immediate result was the great camp of Borate, and the final abandonment of the Harmony and Amargosa Works. Ed Stiles came back into the picture here. Borate was only five miles from Calico but some of the miles from the shipping point at Daggett were through canyons and over hills so winding and steep that the first mule teams used a roundabout route that required three days to make the round trip. Ed Stiles was engaged to improve that service. He jerked his mules over a route of his own selection in a day. It isn't a high speed road, even now, but if the visitor to Daggett wants to take an additional hour's detour, he can drive safely to another point where western history was made. Ruins of the huge ore chutes, ruins of the company buildings, and smaller souvenirs which can be carried away will reward him. Before it was worked out, Borate made money enough to justify Borax Smith in building the \$3,000,000 Tonopah & Tidewater Railroad to tap the Lila C. Mine and put Death Valley back on the map.

Prior to that there were some interesting experiments in desert transportation based upon Borate. W. W. ("Wash")

Cahill, who has a record of forty-eight years continuous service with the company, remembers the most interesting of those experiments—the attempt to supplant the twenty-mule teams with a high-wheel steam tractor. That is the machine you can now see on exhibit with the huge old borax wagons at the gates of Furnace Creek Ranch.

When the tractor was first brought into Daggett an expert in its care and management came with it. By working all night repairing the machine, the expert could make it run nearly all day. Those were rather long hours. Occasionally the expert had to sleep. Then the tractor declined to run. Young Wash Cahill learned to cope with some of its eccentricities. But he was an office man, doubling occasionally as driver of the buckboard used by John Ryan, who had just returned from three years of prospecting in South Africa, and was Borax Smith's right hand man. He made the tractor run when the blacksmiths who followed the expert could not. He made a hit with Ryan.

Frank Tilton, on the other hand, was a mule-skinner. When he was put to work on the Borate-Daggett route he suspected that the tractor was designed to put mules out of a job. He learned otherwise. After completing their day's trip, feeding and watering their mules and themselves, and settling down for the night, the drivers were always being called from their blankets to haul coal and water out to the tractor, or to haul the tractor itself out of a hole. Frank Tilton never approved of that experiment in desert transportation.

He admits that it could haul a tremendous load on comparatively level hard ground, but in soft ground it would literally dig itself a hole to stick in. After a rain, climbing those hills was like climbing a bar of soap, he says. The tractor had two main drive wheels and a single steering wheel away out in front. Going up the steep pitches it would rear up in front like a fractious mule, lose all steerage way, and settle down for

an indefinite blocking of the narrow road. They tried loading half a ton of sandbags over the front wheel, but even that did not succeed. The mules won. The company finally sold the tractor to the Keane-Wonder Mine, on the northeastern side of Death Valley. It was put in service from the Keane-Wonder over Daylight Pass to Rhyolite. The first trip, it didn't do very well. So the new owners changed it from a coal burner to an oil burner. The second trip it literally blew up its boiler on the Daylight Pass grade. A mule team dragged it aside into the sagebrush. It was not a traffic hazard any more but it was a nuisance because the freight teams always stopped there for a laugh.

When more traffic came to Death Valley, the borax company sent out a long team and dragged the abandoned relic down to Furnace Creek Ranch where it now stands beside the ancient borax wagons for the edification of tourists and the continuing glory of the twenty-mule teams.

Even before the tractor had been definitely retired from the Borate-Daggett haul, the journey of the mule teams had been cut in half by the building of a railroad spur from Daggett to the point at which mules could show their superiority even over railroads. A concentrating plant was erected there to prepare the Borate ore for shipment to the refinery at Alameda. John Roach, who had joined Borax Smith twenty years earlier at Teel's Marsh, was in charge of the plant.

The station was named Marion, for Francis Marion Smith. Borax Smith liked to name places after himself and his associates. The town of Baker, on U. S. Highway 91, the main paved road between Las Vegas, Nevada, and Los Angeles, where an excellent oiled road branches north to Death Valley, was named for Richard C. Baker, president of Borax Consolidated, Ltd., which controls Pacific Coast Borax. A distinguished Britisher, a man of imposing presence, of tremendous energy, and extraordinary business ability, R. C. Baker

quickly and logically acquired the title of "Lord" among the hundreds of employees with whom he came into contact in the California-Nevada desert. It was purely a title of honor and admiration, a tribute to his personality and popularity.

A little south of Baker on the T. & T. Railroad line is a station named for C. M. Razor who has been with the company for forty years and who was chief engineer in the building of the railroad which the magazine *Fortune* has characterized as "one of the era's notable engineering achievements."

Some miles north of Baker on the T. & T. another station named Zabriskie, was abandoned when the neighboring station of Shoshone became the chief trading center in that area. Christian Brevoort Zabriskie provided that name. For him also is named Zabriskie Point, a coign of view of one of Death Valley's most startling collections of shining hills and shadowed vales. If you care to hear more commendatory adjectives than are available among the tourists on Zabriskie Point, just ask any of the old-timers about Chris Zabriskie himself.

Chris Zabriskie came of an old Dutch Manhattan family, but he did not arrive until after his father had gone west as an Indian fighter in the Sioux and Blackfeet wars. He was born in an army post, and found his first job as a bank clerk in Candelaria, Nevada. Francis M. Smith hired him in the Columbus Marsh borax offices. Smith knew a good man when he saw one. Zabriskie grew bigger and bigger in the borax business.

In the course of time the company decided that such a winning personality should no longer be hidden in the desert. It moved him to New York, and through the succeeding years he sold more borax than any one man had ever sold. Eventually he succeeded Borax Smith. In the year before Zabriskie's death, Carl Reik, who operates a filling station at Coaldale,

Nevada, found in the ruins of a building near Columbus Marsh the Chris Zabriskie wedding announcement dated fifty years earlier. He had been in the business all those years.

Other notable men in the business had other places and things in and around Death Valley named for them. There is Gower Gulch, for Harry Gower, whose father gave the name to Gower Street in Hollywood. There is Corkill Hall at Death Valley Junction, for the second of the Fred Corkills. There is rasorite, named for C. M. Rasor, a newer and richer borax ore than colemanite, now being mined and milled in apparently unlimited quantities near Kramer in the Mojave Desert, ninety miles southwest of Death Valley, and only twenty miles from the route over which the twenty-mule teams originally hauled Death Valley borax.

The little station of Evelyn on the T. & T. north of Shoshone bears the name of Evelyn Ellis, who was to marry Borax Smith and become the mother of his four children. The station of Sperry was named for an adopted niece.

But Death Valley had to wait a long time for such incidental monuments along the lines of its history. With the borax business centering within easy reach of the railroad at Daggett in the 'nineties and the early years of this century, Death Valley was as nearly deserted as it had been a third of a century earlier.

Through those years men were dying in Death Valley at the rate of only one or two each year. Most of those men were unknown, unfound, and unsung. Death Valley's death rate has never been so high as a few purveyors of vicarious thrills have tried to make out.

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## CHAPTER X



### DEATH VALLEY'S DEAD

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FURNACE CREEK RANCH lay under a wilting sun in the summer of 1899. It had not seen a twenty-mule team for ten years. The baled alfalfa was piled so high that it seemed useless to produce any more. Jimmie Dayton was becoming disgusted with his fifteen-year-old job of looking after the place. About the only prospectors who ever appeared any more were Doc Trotter or Shorty Harris or Johnny Mills. Of course Frank Tilton showed up once in a while from Daggett with a short team, bringing supplies, helping with a little carpentry, and otherwise making life bearable.

It had not been so bad before Jimmy fell in love. Before that he had been able to take a half-year's pay, go to Los Angeles and impress the girls around the United States Hotel and elsewhere with his importance as a desert rancher. Such a spree would keep him contented even in the solitude of Greenland, or Furnace Creek Ranch, for months. But after years of such care-free goings-on, one of the girls impressed him as much as he had impressed her, and he found himself back in Death Valley with a bride.

She liked it in the spring, when all Death Valley blossoms if its annual inch of rain happens to fall in the right month. Of course she was lonesome after the gaieties of a metropolitan Los Angeles that boasted one-twentieth of the population that it boasts today. But Frank Tilton occasionally brought

in a bit of news from the outside world, or Johnny Mills, who had an eye for the girls and a fund of good stories, relieved the monotony for a day or two. When Shorty Harris really got under way with his true tales about his burros the long evenings were shortened.

"The smartest boorow I ever had," said Shorty, "was Maria. Mebbe next to the smartest. Maria always led my string. The other boorows would do whatever she told 'em. Once I got too heavy a pack on her. It was highgrade from my claims down by the old Confidence. When I unloaded her that night she just give me a look and walked away. Next mornin' I couldn't find her. Of course I couldn't go on without Maria. I spent four days lookin' for her. Then when I'd give up and come back to camp ahead of time, I seen another boorow carryin' a pail of water with the bail in his teeth. Another one was carryin' a block of hay with a wire around it. I follered careful where they couldn't see me, and I seen 'em go into a narrow cave behind a greasewood bush, off a barranca. And there was Maria, livin' fat and easy. I apologized to her. I had to. I told her I wouldn't never overload her again. After that Maria worked for me long and faithful.

"But another boorow I had was even smarter. I noticed one night he seemed kind of sick. When I give him a bucket of water, nice and cold out of the spring, he jest took a sip and let out a moan like a squaw with a bellyache, and give me a dirty look. I tried to make it up to him by givin' him a hot flapjack off my stack, and I noticed he held it in his mouth for two-three minutes before he swallowed it. Later on I noticed him drinkin' some warm water I'd set aside to wash up with. And all of a sudden I ree-lized that boorow had a toothache. I held out another hot flapjack and when he opened his mouth for it I saw a hole in the tooth. Well, next mornin' he was gone. He didn't come into camp for water like the others. But I was prospectin' around there some, so



I didn't bother. It must of been about four days later when he showed up again jest as full of ginger as a boorow can get. No toothache no more. He walked right up to me, and opened his mouth and let out a terrific bray. And do you know what?"

"No," said Mrs. Jimmie Dayton. "What?"

"They was a solid gold fillin' in that holler tooth. I spent months lookin' for the ledge he'd got it off of. I never did find it. It must of been the Breyfogle."

But even such tales lose their charm in a Death Valley summer. Mrs. Dayton induced Jimmie to take her back to Los Angeles, by wagon to Daggett and thence by train.

"If you want to live with me, Jimmie," she said, "you got to live where there's some life and comfort."

Alone, after a brief period of wedded bliss, in a spot where loneliness had never before worried him, Jimmie decided to follow. It was August in Death Valley—the same sort of August of which he had had many experiences. He induced a visitor to stay and take over the negligible summer duties of Furnace Creek Ranch. He sent an Indian out over the Panamints to Ballarat, the nearest post office, with a letter directed to the company's Daggett office, announcing his resignation and the date on which he was starting with a four-horse team and wagon, and two led horses, borrowed a few weeks before in Daggett, when two of the ranch horses had foundered. His household goods and supplies for the trip were in the wagon.

It cost five dollars to get an Indian to climb the Panamints, stop a night at Wildrose Spring and make Ballarat late the next day. It was conventional procedure when anyone planned to travel between Furnace Creek Ranch and Daggett in the summer. It was just as well that someone should know when the traveler was starting and when he should be expected to arrive. If he failed to arrive, help could be sent.

However, an Indian could get very drunk in Ballarat with five dollars in those days. Jimmie's Indian postman must have done so. In any event, it was two weeks after Jimmie's start from the ranch before his letter reached Daggett. Wash Cahill read it, and calculated swiftly. With a good team and light load, Jimmie should have made the trip inside of a week, even in summer. He was at least a week overdue. Something had gone wrong. Cahill summoned Frank Tilton, and explained the situation. This is Tilton's story.

"I'll go," said Tilton. "Jimmie's got a set of harness that belongs to me. When one of his horses foundered on the dry lake coming in ahead of me the last time, we had to cut the harness off, and he borrowed a set from me."•

"You'll need someone with you."

"Dolph Navares is a good man."

"All right, if he wants to go. It's a mean job."

So Frank Tilton and Dolph Navares started for Death Valley's blazing summer inferno. Coyote Well, Garlic Spring, Saratoga Spring, Bradbury Well, fell behind them in three blistering days, and they headed into Death Valley. Another camp at Bennett's Well, and still they had not found the missing Jimmie Dayton, or recent marks of a wagon. They were only twenty-two miles from Furnace Creek Ranch now.

They were wondering if Jimmie Dayton had decided not to come after all, and was safely and more or less comfortably snoozing in a wet spot of shaded alfalfa at the ranch. If so, and they had made the trip through hell for nothing, they were in a mood to commit murder. Then, three miles on the final lap of their long journey, they discerned Jimmie Dayton's wagon dancing foolishly in the shimmering heat. There was a dark blot on the road in front of it. They whipped up their own weary horses.

Yes, that was Jimmie's wagon. And the dark blot before it was Jimmie's four horses, dead in their traces, tangled and

heaped across the wagon tongue. A smaller dark blot at the rear of the wagon was the two led horses, their dead heads held up by the short halters still tied to the rear end-gate of the wagon. But there was no Jimmie. Frank Tilton inspected the scene with the experienced eye of a teamster. The reins had been tied to the lazy-back of the driver's seat, but had been slashed through, apparently with one swift knife-stroke, at about the distance that a driver's hands naturally would fall. Apparently Jimmie, for some unknown reason abandoning the team and wagon, had known that he would never come back. His last move had been to release the animals from the reins so that they might find their way to water, and possibly to life. But there had been a deeper instinct at work before that—the instinct of the old twenty-mule swamper to set his brake the moment his wagon came to a stop. Jimmie Dayton had set his brake, and forgotten to release it when he drew his knife across the tied reins to give the team a chance at freedom. They could not drag the loaded wagon with brakes set. They died in their harness, milling and struggling about in an agony of thirst and heat.

But where was Jimmie Dayton? A mongrel dog, starved to a skeleton, barked weakly but viciously from a near-by clump of mesquite. Tilton investigated. There was Jimmie's dog, unharmed except for hunger. And there, under the mongrel's loyal protection, was the body of Jimmie Dayton, twisted a bit as if in pain, with the head resting upon one hand. The whole tragic story was clear enough to men who knew the possibilities of a Death Valley summer. Jimmie had been taken suddenly ill. It might have been sunstroke. It might have been a heart attack induced by the sun. It might have been a violent retching nausea. Whatever it was, Jimmie had been certain it was the end. He had cut the reins to give his horses a chance, and had crawled away to die in the shade of the mesquite.

Tilton and Dolph Navares fed and watered the little dog, and drove on to Furnace Creek Ranch to report. There they took some boards from a barn Frank Tilton had helped to build only a few months before, and nailed them together to make a coffin. With the coffin and a tarpaulin and two shovels they drove back next day to complete their gruesome job.

"It wasn't much of a grave," says Frank Tilton. "We could only dig it four feet deep because we got into water at three feet. Jimmie wasn't fit to be moved. We figured he'd been dead about three weeks in that heat. We just rolled him into the tarp with the shovels. I slit his pockets with a knife and found about eighteen dollars in silver and a watch. We lifted his body in the canvas and put it in the coffin and buried it. That was all." He paused and mustered a reminiscent grin.

"I've heard a lot of things about that burial," he said. "I've heard we buried Jimmie with military honors. But it seems to me after forty years that the only things that was said was what I said, and it was something like, 'Well, Jimmie, you lived in the heat and you died in the heat, and after what you been through I guess you ought to be comfortable in hell.' "

The real funeral didn't come for so many years later that the authorities even got the date on the permanent monument wrong. It was Dolph Navares who disclosed that fact. In the years when the first wooden headboard, bearing only Jimmie Dayton's name, split to pieces in the desert sun, and Pauline Gower's ironing board was brought down from her home at the Biddy McCarthy Mine, to mark the grave, the year of Dayton's death came to be accepted as 1898. When Shorty Harris was buried beside his old friend, in 1934, the date had not been corrected. When State Senator Charles Brown, the same Charley Brown who is genial host, store-keeper, postmaster, and so forth at Shoshone, paid for a bronze plaque to mark the twin graves, the wrong date appeared upon it. It reads:

"BURY ME BESIDE JIM DAYTON IN THE VALLEY WE LOVED. ABOVE ME WRITE: 'HERE LIES SHORTY HARRIS, A SINGLE BLANKET JACKASS PROSPECTOR.'—EPITAPH REQUESTED BY SHORTY (FRANK) HARRIS, BELOVED GOLD HUNTER. 1856-1934. HERE JAS. DAYTON, PIONEER, PERISHED, 1898. TO THESE TRAIL MAKERS WHOSE COURAGE MATCHED THE DANGERS OF THE LAND, THIS BIT OF EARTH IS DEDICATED FOREVER."

When that bronze plaque announced the date of Dayton's death as 1898, some of the historians who love accuracy in dates above all things, asserted that it was wrong. Wash Cahill said it was right. Frank Tilton said it was right. Then Dr. Theodore Palmer, who has long been interested in Death Valley, found an item in a Washington paper of 1899 telling of Dayton's death. When Dr. Palmer came to Death Valley, in April, 1938, he talked with Ray Goodwin about it. Together they walked up Cow Creek Canyon and found Dolph Navares irrigating his patch. Dolph had helped Frank Tilton with the burial. They asked him about the date. Rather sheepishly he admitted that he had made a mistake. He knew because he had bought a watch just before he made that trip into Death Valley. And only a week before this interview he had taken the watch to a jeweler, and the jeweler had shown him the year of purchase—1899—scratched on the inside of the case.

Soon after that, a research worker in the Bancroft Library at Berkeley discovered an item in a Los Angeles newspaper of August, 1899, narrating the death of Jimmie Dayton.

It is a handsome monument, and a worthy epitaph. There is no need to change it. A year makes no difference to Death Valley or to Jimmie, and this spot waited nearly forty years for its dedication. There have been three services there, if one may characterize Frank Tilton's brief and pointed re-

mark as a funeral service. The second came when Shorty Harris was buried beside his friend in 1934.

Through his latter years, Shorty had displayed a childish delight in the publicity which his tall tales and undisputed mastery of the desert gained for him. When he knew that he was dying, at the age of seventy-eight, and had been assured that his choice of burial place and epitaph would be respected, his only remaining worry was that the grave would not be visible from the new road which the CCC boys were building on the west side of the valley. When told that the new road was only fifty feet above the old, and that all the mesquite would be grubbed out to clear the view, he died in peace.

Shorty's funeral was an impressive affair. His friends gathered from as far away as Reno and Los Angeles. The prospectors, especially, were eager to honor their uncrowned king, but the habits of a lifetime prevented them from being either reverent or sentimental about it.

The men who dug the grave, remembering that Shorty was short, saved themselves labor by making it to fit. They forgot that the body would be in a coffin of normal length. So when it came to interment, the service was delayed until the grave could be lengthened.

A girl reporter in the group noticed one hard-bitten old man pacing and muttering while the grave was being enlarged. Poor old fellow, she thought, he's wondering whether he will be next. And being a good reporter she stepped near the old man's line of march to catch a muttered word. As he passed her, eyes on the rough ground, she noted an aroma of whisky. Well, she could not blame him for that. Even Shorty would not blame him. It was in the tradition of the craft. But the muttered words were even more revealing.

"Why don't they plant him? Why don't they plant the old sonofabitch? Why don't they plant him?"

And so, presently, they did.

The funeral service at Shorty's grave was a second, if vicarious, service for Jimmie Dayton. The third and final service came with the dedication of the monument of native stone, erected by the CCC boys and faced with the bronze plaque provided by Charley Brown.

Shorty should be happy to know that few Death Valley visitors will overlook that monument.

In contrast, far to the north, and unnoticed from any road, is a weather-worn head board bearing an inscription which is already fading:

"VAL NOLAN  
"DIED ABOUT AUG. 6, 1931  
BURIED NOV. 6, 1931  
VICTIM OF THE ELEMENTS.  
R.I.P."

Death Valley is not a land of tombstones, or even of graves, despite the many deaths which popular fancy has attributed to it. On a hill overlooking the attractive public camp grounds and trailer park maintained by the Park Service, a mile east of Furnace Creek Ranch, half a dozen low heaps of stones mark the Indian graves. A few steps away is the grave of Steve Esteves, who didn't even die in Death Valley, but in a hospital bed in the well-shaded and well-watered Southern California town of Monrovia.

Still, Steve Esteves had some claim upon Death Valley. He left a widow there, and children.

And speaking of Steve Esteves, this seems an excellent place to record the drama of his life and death as set down in a column entitled "Sage and Tumbleweed," nationally circulated in the *Register*. It appears under the by-line of Inyokel—a suggestive combination of Inyo, for the county in which Death Valley lies, and yokel, to suggest the county's rustic character. It is, I feel, a bit of writing with a sympathy



*Courtesy of Charles Brown.*  
**Shorty (Frank) Harris,**  
 1856-1934, most famous of  
 Death Valley prospectors.



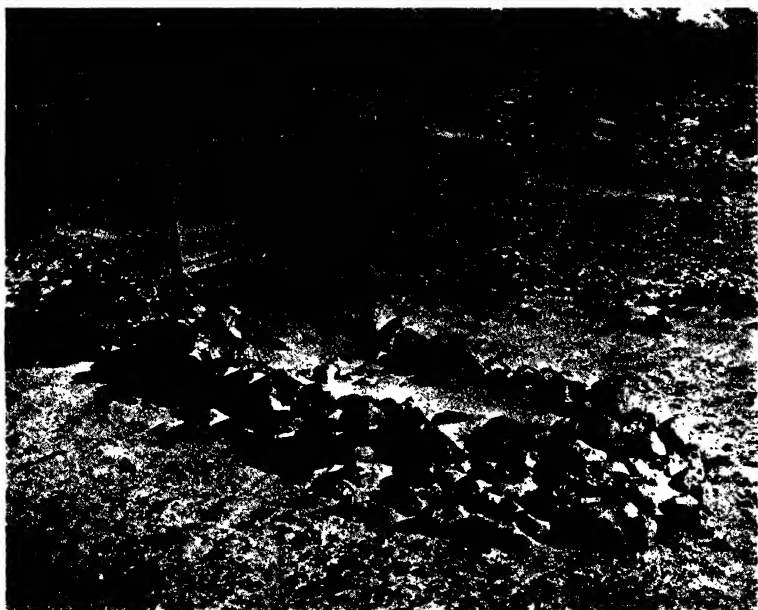
*Frashers Photos, Pomona, California. Courtesy Death Valley Hotel Company.*  
 The monument erected by CCC boys to the memory of Shorty Harris, once known as dean of Death Valley prospectors, and Jimmie Dayton, who perished at this spot in 1899. The bones shown are all that remain of Jimmie's six horses, which died of thirst in their harness.





*Courtesy California State Library.*

One of Death Valley's victims, never identified. This skeleton was found and buried more than a third of a century ago.



*Courtesy U. S. Dept. of Interior.*

Val Nolan's grave on the alluvial fan west of Stove Pipe Well. The inscription reads: Val Nolan; Died about Aug. 6, 1931. Buried Nov. 6, 1931. Victim of the Elements. R. I. P.

and tolerance wide enough to soothe the woes of the world if it could reach the hearts of humanity. Father John J. Crowley, the padre, who was Inyokel, assured me that I would be welcome to quote this story. It is as full of brilliant lights and somber shadows, of grief and ecstasy, as Death Valley itself.

“‘Those are orange trees, Pauline,’ explained the padre, nodding his head toward the left as we spun through the rain. Pauline looked hard and earnestly through the back window, for she had never seen an orange tree. Nor had her little brother, Eddie, seen a train, nor a street car. Their mother, sitting silent beside them, had never seen either orange trees or street cars.

“After all, the iron horse had never crossed Death Valley, and Mary Boland Esteves could not have beheld one of these snorting, fiery snakes elsewhere, for Death Valley had been for her, like most other Shoshone Indians, the entire visible universe. Even if Eddie and Pauline had Steve Esteves, a Spanish Basque, for a father, they knew of the world outside only through him, the radio or their classroom. So, when Fred Williams suggested that we leave them seated in the car in the heart of Yule-decked Monrovia while we transacted other business, he was rubbing Aladdin’s lamp for three children on the threshold of fairyland.

“Steve Esteves—well, Steve was also on the threshold of another world. Up to the day he took to his bed, later to be transferred to the sanitarium in Monrovia, he had been the head stone-mason for the Pacific Coast Borax Company. As such, he had built many of the mottled rose and buff and ebony terraces and embankments that mount from the valley floor to Furnace Creek Inn, or gird the date orchard and the golf course at the ranch below. Not here, but in the years that he burrowed in the mines of Nevada, years before blowers and safety devices became compulsory, Steve’s lungs had become filled with the deadly dust that spelled certain death from silicosis, miner’s consumption.

"So it was that the padre visited him in his bed by the apricot tree one afternoon, and from reminiscences of the desert they drifted to Spain, thence to Mexico in Steve's footsteps, then to the East and back to the West and, finally, by the aid of God's grace and that sense of direction which even a padre acquires in the trackless parishes, to the things of the soul.

" 'When Steve found out that he had actually made his confession after so long a time,' confided the pastor later, 'tears ran down his cheeks. Hard-boiled? There is no such thing as a hard-boiled desert man. That tough exterior is only a desert varnish, such as even the very rocks acquire from exposure to sun and storm.'

"That visit had been two weeks ago, and it had been followed by Communion and Extreme Unction administered by the local clergy. Today's hegira from Death Valley was due to the padre's desire that Steve should see his family ere he died, and to a detail that had not bothered Steve much previously, the lack of any formal matrimonial bond, civil or ecclesiastical, between himself and Mary Boland.

"This afternoon we had remedied all that, with Fred Williams and Inyokel as witnesses in as strange a wedding as I have ever known. The bride knew no English, the bridegroom but little of the Indian tongue. So their daughter, Pauline, who was the first child ever baptized in Death Valley, acted as the interpreter, asking her mother if she would 'take Steve Esteves in sickness and in health until death does you part,' and translating for Father Johnson and the rest of us her mother's guttural assent. . . . Two sentences will never die in my heart—Steve's injunctions as his dear ones said goodbye. 'Pauline, do what the padre tells you and you will be always right,' and 'Padre, remember! Death Valley for me!'

"Less than a week after, we knelt in the hall of Furnace Creek Ranch for the first Catholic funeral in Death Valley. Dobe Gunnarson was there; Dobe who had worked with Steve on many a wall. And Johnny Mills, who is the dean of the valley's first prospectors. And

Hank Patterson, the husky Indian who had packed a thousand tons of cement and a mountain of rocks for the artist whose broken body lay before the improvised altar, set against the piano before the stage. The catafalque consisted of two backless benches; the candles beside the coffin were hardly liturgical, but they were miners' candles, and Steve would have liked that.

"The padre answered a lot of questions by his little talk, explaining why Steve was enjoying the full honor of Catholic obsequies, because God had given him the privilege of a long illness in which to recall what he had left in his Father's house, and had given him grace to return. A sentence or two linger in my memory: 'If you seek his monument, look around you. . . . But these things he could not take with him. . . . St. John relates the glories of heaven, and describes the walls as built of all manner of precious stones, jasper, sapphire, chalcedony, topaz and amethyst! May I interject here one of Steve's expressions, one understandable in a man who has used like idioms in a reverent sense in his native tongue, and which lacked malice even in his broken English. "By God," said he one day as I reveled in the beauty of a wall which he had fashioned so lovingly, fondling each stone as he winnowed it from a hundred others, "By God, Fader, some day I build you fine altar." He can no longer build us the altar, but can we not pray that he may soon enter the gates of pearl, soon glory in the splendor of the stones he understood so well, nay, that before long he may stand by the dazzling throne of His Creator, and remain forever close—by God?"

"At his first visit to Steve at the hospital, the sick man recalled to the padre an incident he had forgotten. Steve rehearsed, gasping for breath as he chuckled, the occasion on which he was doing a little stone work for the pastor at Lone Pine. In his characteristic fashion, the artisan had muttered often and not infrequently spoke out loud about the faults and ancestry of the stones he was setting in place. Particularly was this true when he caught his finger in a crevice or dropped a boulder on his toes. He tried to restrain himself when he observed the priest

about, but the alert padre did not miss much. Came an afternoon when an interested lady visitor marveled at the diversity and beauty of the wall. 'What lovely rocks! What is this? And look at this.' Turning to the padre, 'Do you know the names of these?' 'No,' countered the pastor, 'but this man knows the name of all of them.' 'Oh, isn't that wonderful! What are they?' 'Well,' the priest cut in before Steve could answer, 'you can start in with the son of a so and so, and work up.' "

Such, then, was the life and death and obituary of Steve Esteves, who rests a few paces from the half dozen Indian graves which constitute Death Valley's permanent cemetery. Too bad that it cannot all be engraved upon the monument which Dobe Gunnarson has erected in memory of his friend and fellow worker.

Death Valley's few graves are scattered from one end of the 130-mile sink to the other. After the latest hasty burial of a human body that had been found on the Panamint slopes and carried down with great difficulty to the valley, and across to a point below the mouth of Golden Canyon, the authorities decided that hereafter such decomposing bodies should be buried where they lay. Frank Tilton had made a similar decision forty years earlier, but it required a harrowing experience for two rangers and a group of CCC enrollees to come to such a wise decision. Even so, they did not get that body to the cemetery.

The fact is that despite its reputation as a killer of men, Death Valley is not marked by many graves. Some of the diaries and published reminiscences of the 'Forty-Niners who first encountered the valley, mention that "eleven young men" left the original train guided by Captain Hunt from Salt Lake City, to make their way westward with only what supplies they could carry on their backs. Other reports state

that nine of the eleven perished together in the northern end of Death Valley, and that the nine skeletons were found there many years later. No graves mark the spot or verify the story.

Such reports as those published in a book by Arthur J. Burdick in 1904, entitled *The Mystic Mid-Region*, stating that "sixty-eight out of the seventy Mormon emigrants who wandered into that dread region in 1849 gave their lives to the christening" are utterly absurd. Burdick sidestepped the need of corroborative detail by the simple expedient of saying that "the story of their terrible death from tortures of thirst and agonies of heat is too horrible to print." The truth is that there was no such story in fact.

Even the lack of facts did not deter him from setting down numerous items of fancy in the guise of truth. For example, he stated that the borax works were closed in 1888 because it was impossible to find men to work the mines or drive the mules in that "terrific heat and poisonous atmosphere." He says that "it became known that few men who entered the mines came out alive." The fact is that in the 'eighties, all work was performed in the open air, in a climate delightful through the eight months of the year in which borax was being produced. But no facts could stop the wild play of Burdick's imagination. He described Furnace Creek as "bitter, poisonous, and unpalatable, flowing through burning sands . . . heated as though literally flowing from a glowing furnace." The fact is that it is excellent water, only slightly warmed at its subterranean source. He described Ash Meadows as "a plain strewn with scoriac debris—a Sodom of the Western world." On the contrary, Ash Meadows is the most extensive and best-watered oasis within forty miles of Death Valley, larger if less lovely than Furnace Creek Ranch itself. A large part of the Burdick book could be similarly contradicted, line by line.

But such writings as Burdick's, widely distributed thirty-five years ago, undoubtedly fixed in the popular mind a false idea that Death Valley was literally covered with graves and unburied skeletons. There are in truth a few besides Jimmy Dayton's, Shorty Harris's, and Val Nolan's. The park authorities know of only half a dozen outside of the tiny cemetery.

W. M. Shadler, a teamster who died on the Wingate Pass road of the twenty-mule teams more than fifty years ago, was buried there. There is an unidentified grave near the mouth of Wingate Pass. Nothing but a skeleton was found to bury in that grave. Another unidentified skeleton was found a few years ago a mile east of Bennett's Well. Death Valley Scotty found the body of Johnny LeMoigne, whom he knew, south of Salt Creek hills twenty-four years ago. Nearly everyone in the Death Valley region in those days knew Johnny LeMoigne. He was a big genial Frenchman who had discovered and opened the LeMoigne Silver Mine at the Cottonwood Canyon end of the Panamints. An unidentified man was found dead on the road three or four miles north of Furnace Creek Ranch in 1933. For many years a grave marked by an iron pipe at the extreme southern end of the valley was a landmark among prospectors. "Turn north at 'the dead man' and follow Rhodes wash to Bradbury Well." But that man was not, strictly speaking, a victim of the elements. He had swallowed cyanide, presumably obtained at the Old Confidence Mill. Several others have been found just outside the valley.

A few others—there is no telling precisely how many—have been lost and never found, and never buried. One such was my friend David Eldredge, whose disappearance has long been a mystery to old-timers on the desert. Dave's death was one of the few that was nationally noted, partly because of the fact that he came of one of the leading manufacturing families in the Middle West, and partly because of a story of

such dramatic value that the United Press Association wires carried it widely.

One of Dave's uncles was one of the founders of the Cadillac Motor Company. His family started the Eldredge Sewing Machine Company. Some of his kin were interested in the Elgin Watch factory, at Elgin, Illinois. Dave himself, as a young man, worked as a bookkeeper in the Elgin factory. Later, he spent nine years in the Argentine. He was a friend of the Kunze brothers, and when he came from the Argentine in 1907, Ewald Kunze introduced him to the *Chuckwalla* staff, then consisting of Curt Kunze and myself, with my brother Harry in charge of our printshop. Dave could play a guitar in a way to make a gaucho weep, and shoot in a way to make one dance. He lived with us and we were glad to have him. He was still there when our plant burned down, and Greenwater went into its decline, and we left the desert.

In the winter of 1909, I was "filing wires," in the main office of the United Press Association in New York, when an operator across the desk handed me some flimsy bearing a San Bernardino date line with a story that the body of David Eldredge had been found in Death Valley. What made the story worthy of its space in the day's news report was a note found on the body. The note explained that Dave and his partner had been reduced to one canteen of water, and had tossed a coin to see which one would take the canteen, and try to bring help. The partner had won. The note explained that it was being written to clear the partner of suspicion in the event that he should survive and Dave should not.

The facts, as I learned many years later, were quite different. With the camp of Greenwater reduced to a single mining operation, Dave had obtained a job at some properties owned by D. K. Brockington, in the Panamints, across Death Valley from Greenwater. Greenwater was not much in that summer. It centered around the store and boarding house



and feedyard operated by Dad Fairbanks. But it did feel like celebrating the Fourth of July. The announcement went out through the desert. Dave sent word he would be there.

When Fourth of July came, he did not appear. No one paid much attention to that. They assumed that Dave had too much sense to try crossing Death Valley in July and climbing the mile-high wall of the Black Mountains. But three weeks later a man appeared and asked for Dave. He was a Southern European, commonly known as a Bohunk in the mining camps. He appeared greatly disturbed when told that Dave had not arrived. He said they had started together from the Panamints, to cross Death Valley, and that he had found the going so difficult that he had told Dave he would turn off to Furnace Creek Ranch. He had lost all desire to celebrate the Fourth of July. All he wanted was water, and shade. So Dave had given him the heavy six-gun which he always carried, to lighten his own load, and said he was going on. The man had the gun. Dad Fairbanks and Charley Brown, and the others who knew Dave, looked with suspicion upon that gun. As long as they had known Dave Eldredge they had never known him to let it get into the hands of another man.

But the desert-wise Dad Fairbanks led a searching party including his son Verne Fairbanks, his daughter Stella, Charley Brown, Herman Jones, George Badgett, Fred Donovan, and a few others. Most of the searchers were driven back by the Death Valley heat very quickly. The others gave up the search after a few days. Dave Eldredge's body has never been found. It may have been sunk in one of the marshes of the valley's depths. The old-timers believe he was murdered. The Bohunk disappeared. Later inquiry revealed the fact that Dave had been paid an accumulation of several hundred dollars in wages, gold, shortly before leaving the Panamints. He also owned a handsome and expensive gold watch of which he was very proud.

Dad Fairbanks says that if a man had not been dead too long, and was still above ground, he could always find him. The movement of buzzards or ravens furnished sufficient clew. He is credited with having brought out fifteen bodies and buried five between the years 1910 and 1930, when at the age of seventy-three he decided to turn that phase of his desert activities over to younger men.

Only one of the twenty, he says, was found without the telltale buzzards. That was Jim Baxter, who had been reported missing. Dad took an Indian known around Shoshone Station as Weeds, and went to look for Baxter. Weeds found the tracks and followed them to an abandoned mining shaft in which the body lay. There was no sign that he had perished of thirst. There is no mistaking those signs in most instances. The tongue of a man who dies of thirst in the desert is swollen until it fills his mouth. His fingers are raw and worn almost to the bone by an insane digging for water. Usually he is almost nude. He has thrown away his clothing—sometimes even his shoes.

That, according to Dad Fairbanks and other experienced desert authorities, is because the thirst invariably drives them insane before they die. Dad's reputation as the great life-saver of the Death Valley region has been built up through many years by newspaper and magazine articles crediting him with scores of rescues. There were, in fact, not so many. The publicity has made him a legendary figure, second only to that of Death Valley Scotty. His services came to be in great demand. One example will suffice.

When a prospector named Marion Gross, last seen in the southern end of Death Valley, failed to appear at the time scheduled in the summer of 1919, his family called upon Dad Fairbanks to search for him. The first search failed, and Dad returned to his headquarters at Shoshone. But Gross had an insurance policy on his life, and a second search was

organized when Frank Laski, a relative of Gross's, and A. J. Jewel, a deputy sheriff of Los Angeles, came to Shoshone to press the search. Fairbanks enlisted Frank Mallow, a local desert man, and the four set out in a car from Shoshone. Thirty miles out, the car broke down. Those desert roads were not what they are today. I recall that in a dozen trips of approximately sixty miles from Greenwater to the nearest railroad points in 1906-7, we never covered the distance in less than eight hours. Once or twice it took twenty-four hours, of which a number were passed on foot.

When the Fairbanks-Jewel-Laski-Mallow party found that their car would travel no farther, the decision to walk the thirty miles back to Shoshone was prompt and inevitable. It was altogether too hot and dry to stay where they were. They had seven gallons of water. Seven gallons of water can appear to weigh 700 pounds in that region at that time of year. Jewel and Laski did not want to carry so much. The experienced Dad Fairbanks insisted. Jewel and Laski drank their share in the first ten miles. They drank half of Fairbanks' and Mallow's share in the next ten miles. The last precious drop was gone when they had come within three miles of Shoshone. Jewel and Laski were sure that they were dying. Even the seasoned Fairbanks had difficulty in stumbling those last three miles, but he made it, and sent back water and help. The men were saved. Several weeks later Fairbanks found Marion Gross's abandoned camp near the old Ibex Mine. His burros were found with full canteens still strapped to the pack-saddles. Gross's body was never found, but on Dad Fairbanks' testimony as an expert on desert life and death the insurance company paid the policy.

It should be clear by now that there are not very many graves in Death Valley. In the years of the great mining rushes to the neighboring mining camps of Rhyolite, Greenwater, Skidoo, and others less famous in the Death Valley

region, lost men and lost parties were reported frequently, but most of them got out alive.

Very shortly before the rocketing rise and fall of those camps, Nevada's second great mining boom which began with Tonopah and Goldfield at the start of the century had again centered many American eyes upon the West. There were spectacular opportunities for acquiring wealth, through mining, freighting, promotion, and all the business of supply. One of the things most needed was railroad transportation. This was realized most clearly when the Rhyolite boom followed closely upon the heels of the Goldfield boom.

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## CHAPTER XI

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### RHYOLITE AND THE RAILROADS

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ED CROSS and Shorty Harris were breyfogling along the southwestern Nevada border on August 9, 1904, when they discovered rich gold ore in the Bullfrog Hills, only twenty miles from the northerly end of Death Valley. As soon as the good word reached Goldfield and Tonopah, most of the prospectors in those booming camps stampeded to Bullfrog.

Claims were staked for miles around, just as they had been staked around Calico. Shacks began to appear among the tents. Heavy wagonloads of liquor and miscellaneous supplies groaned southward seventy miles from Goldfield over the roadless desert.

Bob Montgomery shipped forty tons of ore assaying \$500 to the ton from the Montgomery-Shoshone Mine, and the Tonopah *Bonanza* announced that he had refused \$1,000,000 for the property. Thereupon the Busch brothers founded the town of Rhyolite, nearer to the Montgomery-Shoshone and to the ample water of Walter Beatty's gushing springs. Beatty was a squawman who had been living at the springs before Bullfrog was discovered. He had overlooked the natural gold almost at his door to do his digging in search of a legendary cache of coined gold presumed to have been buried by the Jayhawkers at the Salt Creek crossing of Death Valley in 1849.

With Jack Keane, who found the Keane-Wonder Mine

on the Death Valley slope southwest of Rhyolite, Beatty had dug up abandoned equipment of the Jayhawkers, but no gold. It is extremely doubtful that there ever was any such gold. The Jayhawkers had gone to California to dig gold, not to bury it.

Only two months after Cross and Harris made their discoveries, Tasker L. Oddie, one of the founders of Tonopah, and subsequently Governor of his State and United States Senator, organized the Bullfrog Mining Company to develop the properties of G. W. Ladd on Ladd Mountain, near Rhyolite. Key Pittman, thirty-six years later to be much in the news as Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, was a member of the board of directors.

Within a year there were three towns in the district—Bullfrog, Rhyolite and Beatty, almost touching. Beatty's springs produced an ample water supply which could be a great help to near-by Rhyolite. A company was formed to pipe water to the town. Hydrant service was supplied to hotels, saloons and other business houses. Barrel service supplied tents and shacks at only twenty-cents a barrel, as against an opening price of two and one-half dollars a barrel. The original camp of Bullfrog moved over and joined Rhyolite.

An ice company was organized and that astonishing luxury was peddled at only five cents a pound. Ice-cold beer lured almost as many prospectors as did the hope of gold. This was a desert town worth knowing. Wandering burros, turned out to rustle their own living, literally blocked traffic in the streets at times. Burro races were one of the town's chief holiday diversifications.

Wealthy and successful mining promoters flocked in. Charles M. Schwab and John McKane, with profits from the Tonopah Extension and Goldfield properties, invested a reported \$80,000. Senator W. A. Clark of Montana, whose millions were known throughout the world, purchased the

Red Oak and began development. Malcolm Macdonald, a famous mining engineer, was reported to have paid \$100,000 for one property. The National Bank and other mines were properly publicized.

Rhyolite was booming, high, wide and handsome in 1905. But its ores had to be freighted by wagon all the way to Goldfield for milling or for further shipment to smelters. Rhyolite wanted a railroad.

It received with wild acclaim an announcement that grading for a railroad had been started 150 miles to the eastward at the Las Vegas siding of the San Pedro, Los Angeles and Salt Lake Railroad, recently built across the Nevada desert by Senator Clark and his brother, J. Ross Clark. The road, Rhyolite heard, would be rushed to Rhyolite and thence northward to connect with the Tonopah-Goldfield road. It would practically put Rhyolite on a main line.

Then Rhyolite received a shock. Grading from Vegas ceased abruptly. There is a small and hitherto unpublicized incident in connection with that disappointment which may be cited for the light which it throws upon the personalities of William Andrews Clark and Francis Marion Smith.

The mines of Borate that had occupied the attention of Borax Smith to the neglect of Death Valley for a number of years were nearing exhaustion. Smith had decided that it was about time to build a railroad from the Santa Fe to open the Lila C. deposit in the mountains which formed the eastern wall of Death Valley. While he was doing it he could run his line on to tap the Bullfrog district. He mentioned it to Senator Clark.

"Where are you going to build from?" Clark asked.

"Probably from Ludlow on the Santa Fe," said Smith. "You know we used to operate borax works up that way at a place we called Amargosa. Hauled to Daggett with twenty-mule teams, and shipped to Alameda, and still made money.

I've got an engineer, a young man named Rasor, who can really survey. And John Ryan can build it wherever Rasor surveys it."

"I wouldn't doubt that, Mr. Smith, but I presume you would not be averse to using a shorter and easier route, would you?"

"What do you mean?"

"There's a station—Las Vegas—on my road about ninety miles due east of your Lila C. Mine. By curving up a little north around the Charlestons you could run a railroad in there for about two-thirds what it would cost you from the south. Grade the whole roadbed with mules and scrapers. You could throw a spur into that new camp of Rhyolite, and pick up some freight business there. I've got a small interest in Rhyolite and a big interest in the S. P. L. A. & S. L. Railroad. I'd like to have such a feeder for my road."

"I'll look into it," said Borax Smith.

He took an engineer with him, and as soon as he had driven across the easy desert miles from Las Vegas to the Lila C., he approved the route. Immediately he put surveyors on the job. Grading operations began swiftly.

Las Vegas was hardly more than a siding, but there was plenty of good water there that had been filed upon by Walter Bracken for the Clark road, and a townsite also laid out by Bracken. Most of the town was a single row of buildings facing the railroad track, with a few houses scattered back in the desert. The trees which now make it lovely had not yet been planted. Such a town could feel even the slight stimulation of prosperity afforded by a railroad grading gang. Both Las Vegas and Rhyolite were delighted. Then came a shock. Grading ceased abruptly. Rhyolite did not know why.

This was why. When the foreman of the grading crews which had advanced several miles across the desert was instructed to connect with the Clark road for the laying of ties



and rails, he was arbitrarily warned away by Clark's representative. Report was made to Borax Smith. Smith burned the wires to Clark's office in New York.

Return messages were politely unrevealing. Senator Clark had gone to Europe.

"But where in Europe?"

They did not know.

Borax Smith, fuming with anger, sent a trusted agent to New York to investigate. The Clark office help smiled like Japanese houseboys when Smith's agent suggested that it was rather odd that a business man reputed to be worth \$100,000,000, with mining, banking and railroad interests extending over half the world, should get completely out of touch with his offices. Many cable messages to various European points failed to elicit any more information.

Only one fact seemed clear. The proposed Borax Smith line could not connect with the Clark line at Las Vegas. Rhyolite's momentary disappointment was relieved when, a few days later the Clark interests started their own branch from Las Vegas, to be known as the Las Vegas & Tonopah.

That was time-honored and profit-proved method of business on the part of William Andrews Clark. When he was taking his first millions out of "the richest hill on earth," at Butte, Montana, he had learned to permit adjacent mines to sink their shafts a little ahead of his own so that the water in his workings could seep down into theirs, save him the cost of pumping, and give him the advantage of their underground explorations. At Las Vegas he was willing to have Borax Smith start a railroad to tap the Bullfrog district, but by the time the district was as well proved as it was in 1906, he wanted that railroad and its contributory business himself.

But Borax Smith was capable of adjusting himself to the shifting of sand beneath his feet. He made an immediate deal with the Santa Fe, and instructed C. M. Razor to pro-

ceed with all speed to the survey of a right-of-way north from Ludlow through the difficult Amargosa Canyon, with a spur to the Lila C. borax deposit and an extension to the Bullfrog district.

To say that Rhyolite was delighted is putting it mildly. It was promised not one railroad but two. And soon there was to be a southward extension of the line from Goldfield, financed by Philadelphia capital, connecting the southern and northern camps with Reno and San Francisco.

The Clark line from Las Vegas, with dry footing, no crooked washes, and naturally easy grades, found it easy. The Borax Smith line found it extremely difficult, especially in the tortuous Amargosa River bottom, where any rain was likely to lift the hidden, sand-seeping stream, to the surface. But with Rasor running the lines, John Ryan in charge of construction, and Wash Cahill attending to the hiring and feeding of men and mules, the steel pushed forward. The *Bullfrog Miner* gave enthusiastic circulation to this.

"The following clipped from the *Las Vegas Age* tells us that the L. V. & T. R. R. is striving to reach here before the Borax Smith line. S. L. Mendenhall, one of the contractors of the L. V. & T., informs the *Age* that rails are laid twenty-five miles out, grade is completed thirty miles, and advance camps are fifty miles northwest of Las Vegas. About 400 men are at work on the line. The road is endeavoring to distance Borax Smith and arrive in Bullfrog first. . . .

"The penny-a-liners who write rot for sensational newspapers will soon be deprived of their best theme. The Clark and Borax railroad is approaching Death Valley, and that awful abyss will be robbed of its terrors. . . . Where now lurk the red-handed assassins of truth, the wailing vampire of bad booze . . . and three-fingered outlaws with their guns, will soon flourish modern hotels, town lot fiends and beer gardens. In fact all the luxuries of civilization."

The story was more nearly correct than most of the impassioned mining-camp journalism of the desert. In less than a year the L. V. & T. reached Beatty and ran on the few steeper miles to Rhyolite. The T. & T. reached Beatty later. The Bullfrog & Goldfield line connected the southern and northern camps. Beatty hoisted a huge banner proclaiming itself "THE CHICAGO OF THE WEST," and erected its magnificent two-story Montgomery Hotel with a bath. Rhyolite had its commodious Southern Hotel, with two baths.

Death Valley was not to get its spacious and beautiful Furnace Creek Inn, with a hundred baths and tiled swimming pool, for a good many years, but the way was being opened.

I was fortunate on a few occasions in 1907 to find an unoccupied room in Rhyolite's Southern Hotel. Rhyolite was extremely busy. There were seven thousand persons making headquarters there, and several hundred going in and out every week. There were seven residents and two transients amid the ruins the last time I visited Rhyolite, in 1939.

It was a busy town; a good town too, in 1906-7. Cy Johnson, who has lived in the neighborhood for thirty-four years, will join with any number of old-timers in vouching for that.

Mr. Johnson laid down his pruning shears in the tiny back-yard vineyard which supplies free grapes for all residents of Beatty who count themselves his friends, and did some vouching for me.

"It sure was a fine camp," said Cy Johnson. "Why, one night I went out on a party and I decided just for fun to see how much money I could borrow. When I woke up next day I had \$700 more than I had when I started the night before. It took me two days to find all the people I'd borrowed that money from and pay it back."

A further idea of the nature of that party, and of Cy Johnson, may be gathered from other incidents of his career in

Rhyolite and points around. On one occasion Cy happened to stop his saddlehorse in front of a small saloon owned by a Frenchman who was a friend of his, and asked for a glass of beer.

"Ride right in and get it," said the proprietor.

So Cy rode in, ducking close to his horse's neck to get through the door. And thereupon a deputy sheriff arrested him for disturbing the peace, and had him fined twenty-five dollars by the local justice of the peace. Cy didn't think that was quite right, especially when he had been invited in by the Frenchman, but he paid without making a fuss. But when the story came out in the *Rhyolite Bulletin*, with elaborations supplied by the deputy, Cy was mad. When he encountered the deputy in the Frenchman's place again, he expressed an urgent desire to lick the tar out of him if he would hand his gun over to the bartender.

The deputy complied. There was a half barrel, cut off and filled with drinking water for wandering dogs and burros on the plank sidewalk in front of the saloon. Cy folded up the deputy with a few deft strokes and then crammed him into the barrel with knees and chin touching, and only his feet hanging over the edge. The deputy was as mad as Cy had been. He begged the bartender for his gun. Cy protested. He couldn't have the gun until he smiled and accepted a drink. Eventually it was accomplished. The officer recovered his gun, changed his pants, and that was that. A good town. Everybody had a good time.

Cy Johnson had come in with his family from Salt Lake City on a grading contract for the L. V. & T. He owned mules and scrapers and knew how to use them. He reached Rhyolite ahead of the steel, and has seldom been farther away than the Keane-Wonder Mine on the Death Valley slope south of Daylight Pass, to which he drove an eighteen-mule team for several years after Rhyolite collapsed in 1909.

Cy was very skillful with a long team. On one occasion he carried a passenger who thought he might get a job at the Keane-Wonder. It was a two-day trip and they stopped overnight at Hole-in-the-Rock Spring. The feeding, watering, and harnessing of eighteen mules, and the incidental preparation of breakfast for two men seemed like quite a job to the hitchhiker. Cy had no swamper on that trip. His passenger offered to bet ten dollars—his only ten dollars—that Cy could not get under way in two hours. Cy said he would do it in one hour.

He forked out the hay for the mules, and started a fire under his coffee-pot. He measured out the grain for the mules and put the bacon in the frying-pan. He threw the harness on the mules. He fried the bacon and eggs, sliced the bread, and ate quickly. Then he washed the dishes and stowed everything in the grub box. By that time all the mules had finished their grain and gone to water and taken their places—all but one. One ornery critter had decided to do some prospecting on her own account. Cy chased over the knoll to drive her back, and for the first time in her blasphemed career, she came back without an argument. That was a break for Cy. He admits it. He was under way, and ten dollars ahead, in precisely fifty-five minutes. That was the only ten dollars his passenger had, so Cy gave it back to him. He might need it if he didn't get a job at the Keane-Wonder.

Cy enjoyed having passengers. They entertained him on a long and otherwise lonely trip. "I pretty near lost one, one day," he says. "He was a Dago. I had a load of dynamite. On a steep pitch one wheel hit a rock. I heard somep'n fall, and I looked back, but couldn't see what it was on account of the turn. This fella could see from where he was. He could see the trailer wheel was goin' to hit that box of dynamite. He hit the grit, runnin', almost as soon as the box. By the time the wheel caught it, he was a hundred feet away, and

pickin' up speed. The wheel smashed that dynamite flat. This Dago was a quarter of a mile away before he stopped to find out the whole outfit hadn't blown up. I don't know why myself."

There are a number of interesting persons in Beatty who have been in the neighborhood almost as long, or longer, than Cy Johnson, and who can tell similar stories of the great days, if one has time to cultivate them. Beatty abounds in judges. There are Judge Ray, and Judge O'Brien, and Judge Gray who now control most of what is left of the once-famous gold camp of Skidoo, on the Panamint slope overlooking Death Valley. Johnny O'Keefe of twenty-mule fame lives there, and the Reverts who operate one of the general merchandise stores and hope the American Electro-Thermo Corporation will bring in some business when it gets the Carrara quarries to operating again, making white cement. Others who know about that country are the McCreas who run the most pretentious filling station and work a lease on Chloride Cliff and hope the Berm-Ball outfit which is shipping from the old Bullfrog Mine will start a new boom. The once famous Montgomery Hotel isn't there any more. It moved to the neighboring camp of Pioneer, at the northern end of the Bullfrog Hills thirty years ago and was as quickly forgotten as Pioneer itself.

Pioneer's chief claim to fame now is the fact that the late famous Tex Rickard went to work with a pick and shovel there after he lost in the promotion of the camp of Rawhide all the money he had made in his famous Northern saloon and gambling house and the historic Gans-Nelson championship fight in Goldfield. Tex did no better in Pioneer than did Pioneer itself. Promotion of prize fights rather than of mines was his metier.

After the coming of Schwab, Macdonald, McKane, and others of similar fame and fortune, the coming of the rail-

roads were the highlights, the aim, and almost the end of Beatty and Rhyolite. Railroads bring comparatively cheap freight- and passenger-rates to desert mining camps, but they reduce the color of the sunsets.

Borax Smith completed the Tonopah & Tidewater Railroad from Ludlow on the Santa Fe to Beatty, with a spur from Death Valley Junction to the Lila C. borax mine in 1907. At this writing it is still operating from Crucero on the Union Pacific line, which was originally the S. P., L. A., & S. L. R. R., five times a week to Death Valley Junction, and onward less frequently to Beatty. Application has been made to the Interstate Commerce Commission to permit the discontinuance of the service, but various legal and technical difficulties have delayed action. Since the almost parallel surfaced highway has taken away almost all its passenger revenue, and some of its little remaining freight, the railroad is a liability which its owners would like to eliminate.

The T. & T. was not as fortunate as the L. V. & T., which sold its rails abroad during the war to end wars at a price almost equal to their original cost.

Business and political conditions were not that way when Borax Smith planned the T. & T. The Lila C. Mine and Rhyolite appeared to more than justify the proposed outlay and labor. Borax Smith had the necessary money and men.

John Ryan, born in Rugeley, County Litchfield, Ireland, in the first year of the California gold-rush, a skilled iron-moulder when he was twenty-one, immigrant to America in 1871, employed by Borax Smith in 1873, naturalized as an American citizen in 1890, returned at the close of the Boer War from a three-year prospecting trip in South Africa, had become Borax Smith's right-hand man in the management of all the Pacific Coast Borax Company's business in the field.

John Ryan was an extraordinary man, as were several of the men whom Borax Smith selected in their youth to ex-

pand the great business which began at Teel's Marsh. Not particularly imposing, of medium height, blue-eyed, with receding hair but jutting nose and determined jaw, he understood men, mines and the desert to their depths. In evidence of his versatility, as similar knowledge is evidence of the versatility of his associate, C. M. Rasor, John Ryan had an intense and highly cultivated interest in the finest classical music. The rose garden which he planted and cultivated with his own hand at his home in Piedmont was famous among amateur gardeners around San Francisco Bay. But when he was roused by some error or inefficiency in the organization for which he was responsible he could cuss in language which stirred the admiration even of the mule-skinners.

A classic example of that talent was revealed when, during the building of the T. & T. he ordered Jim MacDonnell, foreman of the borax refinery in Alameda, to ship a plow to China Ranch, a supply point near the right-of-way, and instead of a plow received a cow.

"Cataran, go out of the room!" he shouted when his daughter Catherine, who was also his secretary, handed him the telegraph message reporting the shipment of the cow after several days of waiting for a plow. But the walls of that room were not thick enough to contain John Ryan's wrath. Catherine heard all about the ancestry and destination of the person or persons who had combined to send a cow to that isolated spot. Everyone in the neighborhood gathered the same information. John Ryan's reputation went up a peg with the skinners and gandy-dancers.

To the delight of all who knew him, he could get just as mad and express himself just as forcibly about his own errors when convinced that he had made them. He was definitely convinced on one occasion while doing a little prospecting on the Death Valley side of the Black Mountains. He slipped down a steep slope of some fifteen feet to the level top of an



outthrust rock ten or twelve feet square. The rock was covered with the bones of coyotes. Abruptly the explanation presented itself. The rock above was too steep and smooth to climb. Below there was a perpendicular drop of several hundred feet. The coyotes had slipped in here, just as he had slipped. The coyotes had starved to death. John Ryan contemplated the probability of starving to death. He did not cuss then.

He studied the situation carefully. There was just room to take three quick steps from the outer edge of his perch among the bones in an attempt to run up the steep rock and reach for a hold upon its upper rim. He took off his shoes and threw them over the rim above. If he got up there he would need them. If he did not, he could starve just as comfortably without shoes. He made the short run, managed to take two short steps up the sloping wall, and leaped for a hand-hold. He found himself on his back among the bones. He rested, and tried again. Again he failed. A third tremendous effort was no more successful. This was serious. He stretched out upon the rock and relaxed. If he did not make it next time he never would. Tomorrow he would be thirsty and hungry and weak. Now he had strength and agility. He studied the wall again and felt it over with his hands for any hollows which might serve for an extra boost toward the top. He marked three spots with the stub of a coyote's thigh-bone. He measured his distance, and prayed, and ran, and leaped. His fingers found the rim-rock above.

He hung for an instant of realization. Then he pulled, and writhed, and twisted until one leg was over. Another twist, and he was on top. Not until he had staggered into camp did he have the strength even to cuss. And then the cussing was not such as to bend out any walls. It was low-pitched and flowing, exhaustive and inexhaustible, and directed entirely upon himself and his folly. Take his daugh-

ter Catherine's word for it. She told me the story. And she admires her father beyond measure.

That was the sort of man whom Borax Smith told to go out on the right-of-way from Ludlow which was being staked by C. M. Rasor, and build a railroad. He didn't even have a title. He just had a job. The title of General Superintendent was given to him by Wash Cahill, whom he established at Ludlow to take charge of the office work and a multitude of other responsibilities in the construction of the line. Cahill soon found that the requisitions for mules, hay, grain, scrapers, ties, rails, groceries and incidentals which he was constantly writing, needed more authority than the commonplace name—John Ryan. So he appended: "Gen. Supt., T. & T. R. R." Ryan laughed, and let it go at that. If Cahill found that a few odd words and letters under John Ryan's name made his own job easier, that was all right.

Labor was the chief difficulty encountered in the building of that road. The problem was to get any sort of manual labor.

It happened that on two occasions during the construction of that railroad, I had occasion to travel over it from Ludlow to the end of track, wherever that might be. A Santa Fe passenger train from Los Angeles reached Ludlow about three o'clock in the morning. The accommodation-construction train left Ludlow over the new T. & T. tracks about five. Even the saloons in Ludlow were uninviting between three and five A.M. The railroad waiting-room seemed to be the logical place to wait. But Mexican laborers always lay thickly on the benches and floor of the little waiting room. It was not conducive to the comfort of other travelers. It was pleasanter to pace the platform for two hours until one could climb into the accommodation car. The Mexicans were always there. Individually they came and went with such regularity that there were always fifteen to twenty in that

small waiting room. Fifteen or twenty days of work, with grub included, would give them sufficient money for fifteen or twenty days of ease and luxury around the Los Angeles Plaza. Then they could go back to the T. & T. for another fifteen or twenty days.

The labor turnover was enormous, especially in summer, when the sun can be very hot on the Amargosa. It worried Wash Cahill. He couldn't keep enough men on the payrolls to speed the work as it should be speeded. In desperation Cahill engaged one hundred Japanese laborers from Los Angeles.

"Those one hundred Japs arrived," says Mr. Cahill, "and it was hot. Shortly before the Fourth of July, I remember. And every one of them had a bedroll as big as that roll-top desk there in the corner. Those bedrolls alone filled a box car.

"We fixed them up with tents and cots, and put them to work. The big dining tent was stretched over a frame on a plank platform with walls of three or four boards below the canvas, right along side the railroad track.

"Now those of us Americans who have seen the Japanese gardeners, men and women, working from daylight to dark in the truck gardens of Southern California, stooping and squatting, and picking and cultivating and weeding hour after hour, may have an idea that they are a tough and industrious people. No doubt they are. But they didn't have what it took for construction work on the T. & T.

"A day or two after they arrived I went out to see how they were getting along. Out of the hundred men, only seventeen were working. And out of those seventeen only eight were handling picks and shovels. The other nine were spraying them with water, by precisely the same skillful but unlovely method that the old time Chinese laundrymen sprayed the clothes for ironing. A mouthful of water and a

'whoosh' sprinkled each coolie as fast as the human spray could operate.

"On the Fourth of July it appeared that one reason their bedrolls were so large was that each contained a jug of saki. And the whole lot of them got drunk. Between the firewater inside and the fiery sun outside, their dining tent got so hot that some of them decided to roll up the sides and let the wind come through. They loosened the canvas sidewalls and tied the guy ropes to the railroad track. The first construction locomotive that came by cut all the guy ropes. The wind did the rest, and did it promptly and completely.

"Their 'book man,' that is the Japanese overseer sent out by the labor contractor to look after them and translate for the construction foreman, came hurrying up to the office. He said he wanted to send a telegram to his boss in Los Angeles. He had it all written out. A masterpiece of condensation, not to say understatement. It was simply this: 'WE HAVE NO HOME.'

"Certainly they didn't have a home with us any longer. We shipped them all back to Los Angeles on the next train."

Thus the Tonopah & Tidewater crawled northward toward the Amargosa Desert. It thrust out a spur from Death Valley Junction to the Lila C. Mine in the spring of 1907, and crawled on a little more rapidly to Gold Center, near Beatty, where the rival Clark line had already arrived.

Ensuing years were to prove that it was far more remarkable as an engineering accomplishment than as an economic accomplishment, although it did very well in development of the vast borax deposits in the eastern ramparts of Death Valley. It opened up notable scenic attractions also, though at the moment they were somewhat obscured by the unequaled swarms of flies around mule corrals and cook-houses at each construction camp. Those flies must go down in history. I have seen them so thick over a cook-house table that a man could hardly see across it. Conditions were somewhat im-

proved after Borax Smith was made conscious of them through the more delicate sensibilities of Evelyn Ellis and Grace Sperry on an historic tour of the region. The fact that John Ryan, Chris Zabriskie and "Lord" Baker were participants in that same tour of inspection may have helped.

It was a gay adventure for the young women. They even wrote a little book about it, an edition limited to a score of copies, bound in limp leather, and presented to each member of the party. The copy before me bears the name of John Ryan, stamped in gold. It all happened only in 1906, but it was the first automobile trip ever undertaken from Beatty, Nevada, to the Lila C. Mine. That part of the journey consumed an entire day. It can now be made in an hour. They began to object to the flies first at Ash Meadows where they stopped for lunch. They spent the night at the Lila C., and there discarded their automobile in favor of a mountain wagon and four-horse team driven by Borax Smith. The flies accompanied the horses in greater swarms. Another day was consumed on the winding fifty miles to the abandoned Amargosa Borax Works. From there, on still another day, they struggled over what Mr. Baker described as "the Devil's Staircase." The authors of the little book asserted that "sometime in prehistoric ages a wagon may have passed that way."

It was, in fact, the way over which Ed Stiles drove the first twenty-mule team, the way through which the T. & T. Railroad was soon to extend. As they reached the railroad grading camp they commented again upon a million flies. And still they had to drive on for hours to the end of steel where Borax Smith's and John Ryan's private cars awaited them.

It is a revealing record of the difficulties of travel into the eastern Death Valley country as late as 1906. Many more months were consumed before the T. & T. was completed.

By the time that was accomplished, and reasonably

fast, safe and comfortable access to Death Valley had been provided, all America had been aroused to an exciting consciousness of the valley's mysteries. Not borax, not gold, not engineers, not miners, but the tricks of a master showman presented Death Valley to a curious, credulous world. Walter Scott had become "Death Valley Scotty," and how!

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## CHAPTER XII



### SCOTTY RIDES

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**T**HERE is a little doubt about the precise age and juvenile history of Walter Scott. If what Lee and Sam Yount tell me about his driving a crude borax wagon at the Harmony Works in 1885 is correct, he was about fifteen years old at the time. If what his older brother, Warner Scott, told me in his one-room cabin in Reno is correct, Walter Scott was born in either 1868 or 1869. If what W. M. King, present county clerk in Cynthiana, Kentucky, tells me is correct, no vital statistics were recorded there in those days but Mrs. Allene Fryman, only living niece of Walter Scott, says his birth year was 1876. If Albert M. Johnson, who has been keeping Scotty as his personal jester for a third of a century is correct, Walter Scott was born in 1872. Scotty himself has permitted the newspapers generally to assume that he was born in 1876.

Whatever the year of his birth there is no doubt that Walter Scott entered Death Valley at what would now be considered a very tender age for a boy to earn his living. The youngest son in the family of a well-to-do horseman, he ran away from his Kentucky home when only a child to follow his brother Warner into the thrilling life of a cowhand employed by John Sparks, later Governor of Nevada. It was on a cattle-driving expedition from a Sparks ranch that he first saw Death Valley. Soon thereafter he found a job as water-boy with a surveying party in the valley, Albert Johnson tells me.

Then he drove a borax team at Columbus Marsh, according to Johnson, and drove one at the Harmony Works, according to the Yount brothers.

The point of interest here is that his acquaintance with Death Valley began as a boy in the 'eighties, twenty years before he was to cash in on his showmanship and the credulity of the nation. He was a sharp-shootin' bronco-bustin' rider with the Buffalo Bill Show when Jim Butler started the desert's last mad decade with the discovery of the Mizpah ledge at Tonopah in 1900.

In that year he had quit the Buffalo Bill outfit with a comfortable stake, due to Bill Cody's practice of withholding fifteen per cent of employees' wages until they left him. He had married Josephine Millius, whom he had met behind a candy counter at Twenty-sixth and Broadway, New York, while he was still the swashbuckling circus man. He had brought his wife to the desert and had seen Tonopah, Goldfield and Rhyolite start their mining booms.

The desert was gold-mad, and all America was conscious of it. Big and little money was so free and easy that many desert residents were grabbing a piece of it. Into that happy situation, well prepared by his years of playing to the gallery in the Wild West Show, and by his earlier years of familiarity with the Death Valley terrain, Walter Scott fitted like a chuckwalla in a crevice. The psychology of the desert, of mining men, and of the general public was perfectly adapted to his needs and his character.

Scott had met Julian Gerard, brother of James W. Gerard, while he was with Buffalo Bill. The Gerards enjoyed close contacts with leading mining promoters of the day. James Gerard married a daughter of Marcus Daly, the Irish immigrant who first announced that Butte, Montana, was "the richest hill on earth," and who proved it to the extent of \$39,000,000. Julian Gerard was a vice-president of New



York's Knickerbocker Trust Company when he was first entertained by Walter Scott's showmanship and interested in Scott's tales of the potential riches of Death Valley. Julian Gerard gave Scott an initial grubstake of \$1,500.

That was a perfectly legitimate business proposition on both sides, very common in the mining development of the day. The usual practice was an oral agreement under which a grubstaker advanced money for a prospector's expenses while the prospector hunted for an ore body. If the prospector found ore before the grubstake was exhausted, his financial backer took a half interest, and the prospector took the other half. If no ore was found before the grubstake was exhausted, it was just too bad. But there were no further obligations on either side. Frequently a second, third, and subsequent grubstakes were arranged on the same terms.

It is not recorded precisely how long the initial Gerard grubstake to Scott lasted. But after a time Scott appeared in Riverside, California, with a heavy bag, bound with chains, padlocked and sealed, and announced that it contained \$12,000 worth of gold amalgam. Riverside is near the edge of the Mojave Desert, only 250 miles from Death Valley. It knew a good deal about mines and miners. It knew that no mine produced gold amalgam, and that no mills were working in Death Valley. It did not get excited, and after a few days Scott picked up the bag and moved on.

For his next publicity release he wisely chose Philadelphia, where he was reasonably certain the public would not know amalgam from high-grade ore, and would not distinguish between Walter Scott and any other western teller of mining tales. Besides, he had improved his technique. By getting off an eastbound train in Philadelphia and reporting to the authorities that he had been robbed of a sack containing 120 pounds of gold amalgam, he put his own name into national circulation.

Coming by wire from conservative Philadelphia, even *Riverside* printed that one. Shrewdly Scott built himself up as a worthy future news source by mourning not for the stolen gold but for his own abused innocence.

"It isn't the loss of the stuff I mind," he was quoted. "I've got a roll left and there is plenty more where the dust came from. But what will the boys say when they hear of it? Why, Death Valley will ring with their merry ha-ha."

He was partly right. There was a "ha-ha" in the desert, but it was not merry.

Walter Scott had opened an apparently inexhaustible mine of publicity. But that was not precisely the sort of mine for which Gerard had advanced the grubstake. So Scott found another. Don't look now, but that heap of rubble up above a bend in the canyon that runs steeply and crookedly northeast from above the old Ashford Mill in the southern tip of Death Valley marks the spot.

Don't be disappointed if you can't find it. Many persons looking for Scotty's mine have been disappointed. Now you know where to look, but even so you would probably fail. A third of a century of Death Valley sun and cloudbursts, supplemented by persistent desert growth, have thoroughly camouflaged that mine dump. It never was very large.

Even Walter Scott, strong and active as he was in 1905, and with the assistance of A. Y. Pearl and Bill Keyes, could not raise a very large dump by hand labor. There was an excellent spring high up in Greyhound Canyon—now mapped as Scotty's Canyon—but there was no road, and Scott must keep his mine so mysterious that he could not let his mules make a trail.

Even Gerard had never seen that mine. The theft of gold reported in Philadelphia had relieved Scott of the necessity of showing Gerard some cashable returns. Gerard wanted to be shown. Scott, robbed of his gold amalgam, needed more

money. So, in that impasse, Scott made a deal with one Burdon Gaylord, an eastern mining engineer and promoter who was developing some properties in San Bernardino county. Gaylord advanced several thousand dollars. Scott promptly supplied publicity.

He arrived at Barstow on his favorite mule from Death Valley in the first week of July, 1905. They knew him in Barstow. His weather-beaten face, his shrewd blue eyes and jovial manner, his huge Stetson hat and blue flannel shirt and flaming red necktie had been widely publicized from Philadelphia to San Berdoo.

They had seen Scott and Pearl and Keyes go out of Barstow on occasions in the past year with a string of pack mules well loaded with supplies and equipment, including plenty of fire arms, headed for a secret mine in Death Valley. They had even put the story on the wires on one occasion when the outfit included two pigeons, two bob-cats, a rattlesnake and a sheepdog. They had been pleased on occasions when Scott appeared with something he could spend for groceries. Barstow depended for life at that time largely upon the Santa Fe Railroad and the provisions of miners' supplies. It was happy to assist either, or both.

And this time Walter Scott had some real spending money. He exhibited it freely. He bought drinks with it. His stock went up faster than Mohawk stock was going up at Goldfield. When he chartered a special train from Barstow to Los Angeles, although he was in a hurry to get to Chicago, in the opposite direction, the news went to Los Angeles faster than the special. When Scott arrived in Los Angeles several hundred persons followed his well-publicized figure from the Santa Fe station to the Hollenbeck Hotel. The Hollenbeck bar, and manager, Rol King, profited materially.

After a day or two of basking in the warm light of that publicity, Scott called upon John J. Byrne, General Passen-

ger Agent of the Santa Fe lines west of Albuquerque. He sailed his sombrero across the office and offered to buy any part of the Santa Fe system that seemed necessary to travel to Chicago in forty-six hours.

In 1905 that was many hours faster than the east-bound run had ever been made. But the Santa Fe understood publicity values as well as Walter Scott. Mr. Byrne figured. After a while he said the train would cost \$5,500.

Scott counted out the bills. No other mine has yet been discovered that produces hundred-dollar bills. Scott's wife later went on record as saying that the special train cost \$60,000. Scott himself said the trip cost \$100,000. But by that time Scotty had a reputation to maintain.

Documentary evidence, revealed by this writer for the first time in print, that the train cost only \$5,500, is contained in the photographic reproduction of the railroad's receipt to Scott, signed by John J. Byrne, appearing in this volume. The receipt, in effect a voucher, was turned over to Gaylord promptly. Together with other evidence of the Gaylord-Scott association it has been preserved through all the years by the charming woman who was Burdon Gaylord's young wife at the time. She released it to me for reproduction.

On July 9, 1905, Walter Scott had more "hot credits" than a motion picture script writer who has just turned in three scenarios grossing \$3,000,000 each. Over night he became "Death Valley Scotty, the cowboy miner, the mysterious Midas of the Desert," God's gift to newspaper editors.

How well both the Santa Fe and Scotty did their stuff has been widely printed and frequently repeated. At noon of Sunday, July 9, 1905, "The Coyote Special" stood ready in the Santa Fe's Los Angeles station. As departure time, set for 1 P.M., approached, the crowds of curious spectators increased until the train sheds were packed. Frank Newton Holman later wrote the official account for the Santa Fe:

"A big automobile dashed up to the entrance of the station and Walter Scott alighted. [You should remember the dashing big automobiles of 1905 to appreciate that touch.] He had to fight his way through the crowd to get to the train. Entering the cab, he shook hands with the engineer, greeted the fireman, and urged by the crowd, made a short speech from the tender.

"In the meantime the party who were to accompany him had boarded the train. Mrs. Scott, a comely young woman altogether without nerves, awaited her husband in the Pullman. C. E. Van Loan, the newspaper representative who was to write the story of the run, busied himself with his typewriter, and the writer hereof completed the quartette.

"At last the clock pointed to the hour. No. 442 gave a warning toot, visitors scrambled off the train, Conductor George Simpson raised a long forefinger and the Coyote began to move. A great cheer went up from the spectators. Scott waved his slouch hat in response, and inside fifteen seconds the Coyote disappeared from sight.

"The passage through the city was a fleeting ovation, crowds lining every street to see the train dash along. The little towns outside Los Angeles fleeted by like shadows, the cheers of the crowds shrilling an instant and then dropping away from the tail of the racing train. . . .

"One hour and fifteen minutes had been the railroad schedule to San Bernardino. The Coyote cut ten minutes off that time. Here a helper engine was picked up and in a few minutes the engine-drivers were attacking the heavy grade of Cajon Pass. A mile before we reached Summit the helper engine was uncoupled on the fly and, while the speed of the train never slackened for an instant, the light engine dashed ahead, ran onto a siding, the switch was thrown back, and the on-coming special whirled over the crest of the hill.

"Here it was a different story. We were on our first descending grade. The problem was not how fast we could run, but how fast we dared run. So we shot down toward Barstow at a mile a minute, turning and twisting in and out, Engineer Finlay's hand always on the air-

RECEIVED

THE A. T. & S. F. RY. CO.  
SANTA FE PAC. R. R. CO.  
SO. CAL. RY. CO.

(Form 948 Standard)

Santa Fe Route

July 8<sup>th</sup>

RECEIVED OF

Walter Scott

Fifty Five Hundred

the sum of *being pay ment for special train for Angelos to*  
*Chicago to Burdon to beat the record of 53 hrs*  
*556.00*

*Wm Valle*

Copyright, 1940, by C. B. Glasscock.

This facsimile of the receipt handed to Walter Scott by the authorized official of the Santa Fe Railroad, here published for the first time, conclusively answers the mooted question of thirty-five years' standing as to the precise cost of that publicity and the time-record-breaking railway journey. When the United States was agog with the story, "Death Valley Scotty" was quoted as saying that the trip cost \$100,000. The fact that the receipt was turned over to Burdon Gaylord, a New York and California mining promoter and operator, as a voucher, answers for the first time in print the thirty-five-year-old question as to where Walter Scott obtained the money for that demonstration of mysterious wealth. The original receipt was released to the author of this book by Mrs. V. F. del Valle, who was Mrs. Burdon Gaylord at the time of the train transaction.

# THE UNIQUE AND ADOBE CONCERT HALLS

## Are Unfair Houses

We request all Union men not to patronize said halls

The unfair girl workers are:

TESSIE ALFRED

KITTY LA BELLE

LITTLE FAY

MAZIE

SKIDOO BABE

FAY

Signed by

THE CONCERT GIRLS

A brilliant sidelight not only upon the industrial but upon the social and recreational life of Rhyolite is revealed in this facsimile of a poster widely displayed around the town in 1906. The original from which this copy was made was preserved by Bob Eichbaum, then a leading citizen of Rhyolite, and later the founder of Death Valley's first caravansary, Stovepipe Wells Hotel.

brake. When he made the mile between mile-posts 44 and 43 in thirty-nine seconds, or at the rate of ninety-six miles an hour we began to feel that the great race was fairly on. Fast time on mountain divisions is a very different proposition from the same rate on the straight-away of the plains. Mountain divisions are full of curves and if one pauses to reflect on the impact with which 338 tons of equipment hits the outer rail of a sharp curve when hurled against it at the rate of ninety miles an hour, the charm of record-breaking is tinged with the pale cast of thought a whole lot. . . .

"At 7:17 the Coyote came to a standstill at the head of the Needles yard. In exactly eighty seconds the train was moving again, a fresh engine taking up the work. Thousands lined the track near the depot, but they had no more than a fleeting glimpse of the flying special and she was gone. [Where the "thousands" came from in Needles is not explained.] . . .

"Here is the menu of the Death Valley Coyote, eaten at sixty miles an hour over a mountain division:

'Caviar Sandwich a la Death Valley, Iced consomme.		
Porter house Steak a la Coyote, two inches thick,		
and a Marvel of Tenderness		
Broiled Squab on Toast, with Strips of Bacon		
au Scotty.		
Stuffed Tomatoes		
Ice Cream with Colored Trimmings		
Cheese	Coffee	Cigars.'

"Three hours of hard mountain railroading brought us to Seligman, where we picked up an hour. Division Superintendent Gibson climbed into the Pullman and his first facetious words were: 'What detained you?'

"Then began the real fight of the trip—a war against heavy grades. Clouds of sparks whirled by the windows. The little Arizona towns winked once as the Coyote passed. . . . [Omit paragraphs on 'nerve-wracking night,' etc.]



"‘Scotty’ rode the engine into Dodge, with the telegraph poles looking like a fine-tooth comb."

[Of course the stops, even in such cities as Albuquerque and Emporia were too short to permit of newspaper interviews, but anyone who knew Charley Van Loan in his heyday knows that he did not allow the newspaper boys to go back to their offices without the making of a story. All the daily newspapers in the United States were full of it. But let's get back to Holman's account for a minute.]

"With Losee at the throttle and a straightaway stretch to the wire, the Coyote cut loose for the run across the State of Illinois. They knew all about ‘Scotty’ and his private train in Illinois. And so they made a holiday out of that July morning, and every little hamlet along the line from Shopton to Chicago turned out to cheer the Coyote on to the goal. . . . We lost five minutes at Chillothe, and four more at South Joliet. Nevertheless we made the run of 239 miles from Shopton to the Dearborn Street Station in Chicago in 239 minutes. The record-breaking run was ended."

The Associated Press and other news services loaded their wires for several days with accounts of the run. Dispatches from Chicago summed it up. For example:

"Chicago, July 11.—With every car blackened by the record-breaking run from Los Angeles to Chicago, the Walter Scott Special on the Santa Fe Railroad arrived here at 11:54 this morning, beating all previous records by hours as well as bettering the special train's existing schedule.

"Consisting of a baggage car, diner and private living car, the train which left Los Angeles at 1 P.M. on Sunday came into the Polk Station [same as Dearborn Station] today almost at top speed, having made the run of 2,244½ miles in forty-four hours and forty-four minutes. This is thirteen hours and five minutes faster than the time of the regular Santa Fe Limited. It is three hours

and six minutes faster than the original contract called for. . . .”

After reveling for a day in the limelight which his publicity stunt had won for him, Scotty journeyed comparatively cheaply and quietly on to New York on the Twentieth Century Limited. New York, which had fallen for the wired stories attending the special run as completely as had any provincial newspaper along the way, began sending out somewhat more skeptical dispatches.

“New York, July 14.—You could have walked up and down today after the arrival of ‘Scotty,’ and not found the streets strewn with \$1,000 bills or gold pieces or even nickels and dimes. It was a bitter disappointment to some who expected to pick up money. Walter Scott, a young California miner, has taken \$141,000.00 out of a mine in Death Valley in the last year and a half, and has spent nearly all.

“Julian M. Gerard, vice-president of the Knickerbocker Trust Company, once grubstaked Scott for \$4,000. Now that the mine has panned out rich, Gerard comes in for a half ownership and a division of the profits. Scotty has not given Gerard a chance to spend any of the fabulous output yet. Gerard took him aside tonight and gave him a little piece of his mind. And there were people about town who said Scotty had been summoned from California to explain. He and his yellow dog arrived at 9:30 this morning on the Twentieth Century Limited.

“One thousand people were at the Grand Central Station when he and the dog hopped off the train. The police pushed the crowd back and Scotty in an electric hansom went to the Putnam House. If anyone thought he could give the Death Valley Croesus points about New York he was very much mistaken. For two years Scotty rode in the cow-punching outfit in Buffalo Bill’s Show, and he is well known along the Big White Way. . . .

“In the afternoon he held a levee at the hotel. First,

he led the reporters upstairs, ordered four quarts of whisky and made a speech, saying:—'Now you fellows have heard a lot about the way I spend money. I like to spend my money but I don't like to give it away. They thought I was going to throw away ten-dollar bills on Wall Street. I always want to get the worth of my money. I struck Los Angeles one time without money enough to get a hunk of bacon. People gave me the icy shoulder. 'Well,' I says, 'all right.' So when I struck it rich and I was down in Los Angeles with some of it later, with suites of rooms at three hotels, high much-a-mucks came around to make friends. The yellow dog was there that day. They were chasing him with rocks. I paid a dollar and got the dog just to show the Los Angeles people that a yellow cur could be better than they were. I took him up to the hotel and bathed him and fed him milk in a silver pail."

The reporters, plus four quarts of whisky, gave that little gem of revelation all the publicity it warranted.

Then a fly appeared in the ointment. A story was sent out on the wires from Cleveland, Ohio, to the effect that the Scott Special was an advertising scheme, cunningly devised by the Passenger Traffic Manager of the Santa Fe System; that the train was never paid for; that on the contrary Mr. Scott was liberally rewarded with gold dollars by the Santa Fe, etc., etc.

In due time the Santa Fe replied to that in the following specific language:

"If there be any doubting Thomas who feels that he has been cleverly fooled to help boom a certain California line, he may rest assured that the transaction was a genuine one all the way through. Mr. Scott wanted a fast ride and paid for it out of his own pocket without any rebate afterwards. He made the proposition in good faith and it was accepted. He had the good sense to choose the road that could and did 'make good.'

"The public wanted to know all about this novel race

against time. The Santa Fe realized the value of the story and helped the newspapers gather the news, which was published because it was news. That all this turned out to be fine advertising for the Santa Fe was that road's good fortune. Shy opportunity, as immortalized by Senator Ingalls and Mr. Dooley, did not have time to get away after knocking at the Santa Fe door."

Scotty had achieved the greatest heights of transient glory possible to a professional player to the gallery. Only Julian Gerard was dissatisfied at the moment. He wanted cash returns on his grubstake. What Scotty wanted was more grubstakes and more publicity. Gerard spoke harshly to Scotty.

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## CHAPTER XIII

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### SCOTTY STRIKES IT RICH

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THE WILD acclaim of the press and populace had hardly faded to the slightly sour report of Julian Gerard's personal reaction when "the mysterious Midas of Death Valley" walked straight into the greatest piece of luck in his entire career. He found a mine from which he could take \$1,000 bills and minted gold. It was in the person of Albert M. Johnson, president of the National Life Insurance Company of America, with headquarters in Chicago.

When Scotty appeared in San Francisco a month after his unheralded return from the East, he found Walter Campbell of the Grand Opera House on Mission Street eager to cash in on recent publicity by starring him in a melodrama of gold, mystery, and record-breaking trains. Charles A. Taylor had outlined the play. Laurette Taylor was a charming little actress who could take the lead opposite Scotty.

But the San Francisco *Call* publicized Scotty's return in only three brief paragraphs, mentioning "the reputation he made in not spending the money he talked of in Chicago." Scotty's publicity stock seemed to be falling but Campbell and Taylor went ahead with their plans to try their proposed play on the dog in Portland.

It is an interesting coincidence that within a week of the time set for staging the melodrama in San Francisco, Scotty reappeared in the news, literally with a bang. The incidents

have gone down in history, and have been built up in legend as "the battle of Wingate Pass."

There were quite a number of shots fired between a party or parties unidentified in the broken rocks beside the wash and a party or parties in the Scott cavalcade. One bullet only found a human mark, passing through the groin of Walter Scott's elder brother, Warner, and thereby precipitating developments, the most embarrassing of which were not to appear until six years later.

The man who made temporary repairs on the severely wounded Warner Scott was mentioned in dispatches as "Dr. Jones." He was in reality Albert M. Johnson. Mr. Johnson himself told me that, and described the wound in detail. It is a point interpolated here to reveal how many years Mr. Johnson has been happily associated with the Scott family. The incident occurred in March, 1906.

A. W. Sinclair and Daniel E. Owen, mining experts presumably representing Gerard in an effort to discover why Scotty's mine was producing nothing but publicity, were on their way into Death Valley under Scotty's guidance to examine the property when the shooting took place. It effectively postponed the disclosures for which the journey had been undertaken.

The party, in wagons and on horseback, included Walter Scott, his brothers Bill and Warner, his associates Bill Keyes, A. Y. Pearl, "Dr. Jones," and the experts.

All was moving merrily until a prospector was encountered. He announced that he had been fired upon from ambush some distance down the road, and exhibited a bullet hole through his hat in evidence. After that the wagons and horsemen moved in more extended order. Mr. Owen was riding in one of the advance wagons with Warner Scott, and Mr. Sinclair was in the rear wagon with Mr. Johnson, or "Dr. Jones." The rear wagon was perhaps one hundred and

fifty yards back, behind a bend in the wash, when the shooting began. The Johnson-Sinclair driver remarked that someone must be doing a bit of target practice. Johnson shook his head and the fusillade which followed caused the driver to pull back automatically on the reins and stop his team. A few minutes later Walter Scott, with rifle in hand, came back to the rig and informed the occupants that Warner had been wounded. That bullet had come too close to Mr. Owen for comfort. He promptly lost all interest in the expedition. So also did Mr. Sinclair.

As soon as "Dr. Jones" could sew up the wound in Warner Scott's groin the party hastily turned back to the railroad. A complaint was filed promptly with the San Bernardino County authorities charging attempted murder. Owen stated that he had been occupying the wagon seat beside Warner Scott at the moment of the shooting, and that as his companion toppled he cried out, "That was intended for Owen."

Walter Scott proclaimed to the world that, "That bunch laid for me and shot my brother by mistake." Sheriff Ralphs of San Bernardino County and a posse moved hastily into the desert to capture the "bandits." The newspapers screamed with the story. The Scotty show opened to standing room only.

Warrants were issued in San Bernardino for the arrest of Scotty, Bill Keyes and Shorty Smith. Sheriff Ralphs, after combing the Death Valley country, announced in a dispatch from Daggett that in pursuit of Keyes and Pearl he had found Scotty's camp and had taken possession of loot from the Confidence Mill a few miles south, which had been robbed sometime earlier.

And so it went, a medley of charges, counter-charges, and insinuations, while the great melodrama, "Scotty, King of the Desert Mine," prepared to open in San Francisco. Nothing could picture that opening more vividly than Blanche Part-

ington's review in the San Francisco *Call* of March 26, 1906.

"For the blues take Scotty. For broken heart, bankruptcy, chronic coughs and all wasting diseases, take Scotty. It builds up the flesh and promotes digestion.

"Scotty is a drammer, by Charles A. Taylor. . . . A shootin', shoutin', sobbin' mellerdrammer. Laurette Taylor plays the feminine lead as Bessie.

"Talk about 'holding the attention of an audience.' They were all but on the stage last night. . . . Why, when Heroine Bessie is tied to the stake by the villians the gallery shouted: 'Never mind, Bess, Scotty'll be there in a minute.' . . .

"I lost track of all the people he shoots in the play. . . . He also murders most of the population, by the noise behind the scenes. . . ."

Perhaps Scotty and his drama did not need any better publicity than that, but with his brother under the care of Dr. C. W. Lawton, and making what appeared to be a losing fight for his life, he began to receive more.

On telegraphed request from the Sheriff of San Bernardino County he was arrested and locked up in the San Francisco jail. Walter Campbell provided \$500 bail, and Attorney John Greely obtained his release through habeas corpus proceedings before Judge Graham in an emergency session at the judge's home. Scotty invited everyone to have a drink, but it turned out to be steam beer instead of the expected champagne.

The play came to Los Angeles with Scotty out on bail. Shorty Smith, who had been named by Owen as the man who fired the shot after having gone ahead and hidden above the road, had been released after giving the San Bernardino prosecutor much "secret" information. Bill Keyes had been locked up at Johannesburg. Sinclair was in San Bernardino waiting for the arraignment. Pearl was under arrest. Walter



Scott was wanted in San Bernardino to face the issue with the others. Art must wait. Sheriff White of Los Angeles arrested Scotty on a telegraphic warrant from the neighboring county and held him in jail in default of \$10,000 bail. Los Angeles theater-goers were forced to content themselves with C. A. Taylor, the playwright, taking Scotty's part in the melodrama.

It was not such an outstanding success as the San Francisco production. The show died. So did the publicity. Warner Scott, the only victim of "the battle of Wingate Pass," was improving by that time, and declined to prosecute. The charges against Walter Scott and all the others were dismissed.

Scotty vanished momentarily from the public prints, but he was still a drawing card around Rol King's bar in the Hollenbeck Hotel in Los Angeles, and around various bars in Goldfield, Tonopah and Rhyolite. Anytime Scotty happened to be in Los Angeles, Rol King found that he could take a stroll with him along North Broadway, Spring and Main streets, and return to the bar with a profitable rush of business at his heels.

It must be remembered that the West was mine-mad in that era. Scotty had an effective personality and had built himself up shrewdly. Many men actually believed he had a mine, and were anxious to get in on the profits. Others were eager to capitalize any publicity in their own promotions. Some wanted to be shown.

Among the latter were Rol King himself, Al Myers, and Sidney Norman. It is an amazing sidelight upon Scotty's showmanship and personality that King, even while he was profiting from the crowds whom news of Scotty's appearance lured to the Hollenbeck bar, could have come to hope, if not believe, that Scotty had a mine. It is astonishing that Al Myers, who had made a fortune in Goldfield and was thoroughly familiar with desert conditions, could have fallen even

tentatively for that tale. Sidney Norman, who knew half the leading mining men in the West, proved himself another bit of evidence of Scotty's remarkable charm.

To induce easterners such as Owen and Sinclair to go into Death Valley in the pleasant weather of March was simple. But to induce Myers, Norman and King to make a similar journey in the appalling heat of summer was, to my mind, the greatest accomplishment of Scotty's life outside of maintaining access to Albert M. Johnson's bankroll through a third of a century.

Even after all the years the memory is a little humiliating to Al Myers, but he did lend me a little booklet, privately printed to tell the complete story of that second invasion of Death Valley under Scotty's guidance to inspect the fabulous "mine."

The trip turned out much as had the trip with the mining engineers, except that instead of gunplay to discourage its completion, the summer thirst of Death Valley was adapted to the same purpose. In support of his contention that the journey would not be too difficult Scotty even took his wife along.

The party started with good mules and adequate supplies, and arrived safely at Bennett's Well. The well was filled with carrion. Scotty laughed that off. He knew of potable water three or four miles north at the site of the old Eagle Borax Works. Hot, weary, and extremely dry, they plodded on to the Eagle well, and made camp.

When they awakened next morning all the mules except one ailing animal had vanished. Not so good! The sun had not yet appeared over the Black Mountains, but they estimated the temperature at 120 degrees. Everyone scouted out through the brush to look for the mules. They found only tracks pointing back toward Bennett's Well. Scotty and Myers plodded southward on those tracks.

But neither mules nor horse were in sight. Scotty suggested that they must have headed on for Barstow. Myers suggested the pre-war equivalent of "Oh, yeah?" Scotty suggested that he was more accustomed to the heat than Myers and he would take the remaining mule and round up the others. Myers agreed, and Scotty disappeared into the glimmering heat toward the south.

Two, three, four stifling days and nights passed. No Scotty! No mules! Five, six, seven stifling days and nights passed. Still no Scotty! Still no mules! Mrs. ("Jackie") Scott was the only cheerful member of the party. Al Myers was growing madder by the day, hour and minute. Sidney Norman was keeping him close company. Rol King was ill with heat, improper food and a poor quality of lukewarm water. Eight, nine stifling days and nights!

Myers and Norman decided to do something about it. Myers had noticed that every evening Mrs. Scott disappeared for an hour or two. Myers knew that high in the Panamints above them Hungry Bill lived on an oasis with plenty of fresh mountain water, a pleasant summer temperature, and fresh vegetables cultivated by the younger female members of his entourage. But he did not know the trail leading there. He knew that the ruts of the old twenty-mule team borax wagons were a level route to Furnace Creek Ranch, only twenty miles away.

So, on the tenth night, Myers and Norman filled their canteens and started afoot for Furnace Creek Ranch. They stumbled weakly into Furnace Creek Ranch two hours after sun-up. When they had absorbed all the fresh water they could, and a little food, they prepared to send back a wagon to pick up Rol King and Mrs. Scott.

The rescue crew had hardly started when it encountered the missing Scotty, cheerfully driving the missing mules. He admitted having had a tough time himself. He had chased

those mules almost 150 miles to Barstow. And while he was there he thought that his friends would enjoy some fresh vegetables. He knew how much Al liked fresh radishes and lettuce. He had brought them some. Wasn't that nice?

Al looked over the radishes and lettuce. They were crisp and fresh. Al knew that no vegetables could be crisp and fresh after a four or five day trip on mule-back from the railroad under a temperature of 110 to 140 degrees and a relative humidity of five per cent. He knew that they might have remained crisp and fresh on a single night's journey from Hungry Bill's Ranch. He decided that Scotty had spent ten days in the cool seclusion of Hungry Bill's Ranch, where the mules had preceded him by prior arrangement. He decided that Mrs. Scott's solitary walks in the evenings had been long enough to permit her to light a small signal fire shielded from the camp by a buttress of the Panamint foothills, but visible to a watcher at Hungry Bill's. Such a signal could have advised a watcher that the little group at the Eagle camp was still intact, and waiting. When the nightly signal no longer appeared it would be time for the watcher to come to the rescue.

That was what Al Myers decided had happened. That is what he still believes.

And that ended the second expedition authorized and guided by Scotty himself to reveal the location of his "mine." Through the next two or three years in which the West was still actively interested in mines, Scotty was satisfied to show up once in a while in Los Angeles, San Francisco or elsewhere, and make minor plays for publicity. His favorite story was that he was being trailed through the desert by men who were prepared to murder him to find his "mine."

Probably he was. Certainly on one occasion he appeared at Barstow with a bullet hole through one leg, and barely able to stick on his mule. A wire to Albert Johnson in Chicago

resulted in arrangements for Scotty to be taken to Johnson's palatial home, where he was quickly restored to health.

San Bernardino sent forth a dispatch on January 7, 1907, announcing:

"The location of the long sought Scotty mine has been disclosed:

"The Death Valley mystery, Walter Scott, filed his first location notice today. . . . The mine is a placer property, and its location shows the shrewdness of the miner; for while he had claims on the east side of Death Valley in the Funeral range of mountains, his real source of wealth was on the west side in the Panamint range.

"The location notice was forwarded from Chicago to the County Recorder by A. M. Johnson, Scotty's partner who returned recently from a caravan trip into the desert. The 'Sheephead,'—for that is the name of the mine—has been carefully located, not merely by the usual signs of the desert prospector but by careful surveys, which name the exact location by degrees and minutes. It is close to a willow tree at the foot of a bubbling spring. From the center monument the Telescope peak bears north 79 degrees, distant 10 miles.

"The mine lies in an isolated district which has baffled discovery of hundreds of miners who have sought it. Scotty is at present at Greenwater, on the desert, and has as much money as ever."

By July of 1907, the "mine" had moved back to the east side of Death Valley. A dispatch from Goldfield announced that a party of mining men had returned there with a report that they had located claims adjoining Scotty's mine, on the west slope of the Grapevine Range. One of the claims, they asserted, had a large chimney of ore running from \$15,000 to \$20,000 a ton.

Time of course proved that statement to be erroneous. The dispatch concluded: "Scotty is in the East and has recently wired friends that he expects to reach an agreement

with the Gerards of New York, who grubstaked him years ago, and he will then be free to divulge the location of his mines.”

A dispatch from Chicago on the following day supplemented that news with the statement that, “Albert M. Johnson, president of the National Life Insurance Company of America, believes in Scotty’s mine. Scotty’s business here, he says, is to get Johnson to buy out Gerard’s grubstake claim on one-half of Scotty’s ore for \$300,000. . . . Scotty left tonight for New York to deal with Gerard.”

His technique appeared to be falling off some months later when he announced in San Francisco that employees of the Bank of Italy had broken the lock of a trunkful of high-grade ore and stolen part of his treasure. One of the leading banks of the Pacific Coast did not relish that sort of publicity. Scotty was promptly thrown into the hoosegow. The *San Francisco Call* next day reported the incident as follows:

“Walter Scott—Scotty of Death Valley—after spending a night in the city prison sobering up from his latest debauch, was an abject figure when he was brought face to face, in the office of Acting Captain of Detectives Ryan, with Amadeo Giannini, vice-president of the Bank of Italy, yesterday morning. He humbly apologized for having charged officials of the bank deposit vaults with having broken the lock of his trunk and stolen a portion of his alleged ore stored therein. . . .

“Chief Biggy advised Scotty to get out of the city and not annoy people by his cheap advertising methods.”

There was a notable fading of Scotty from the news after that. The panic of 1907, starting with the failure of the Knickerbocker Trust Company, of which Julian Gerard was vice-president, dealt a heavy blow to mining promotion. It was not until 1912 that Scotty again crashed the front pages with a story which left even his publicity-loving egotism dazed and reeling.

Scotty announced that he had sold his fabulous "mine" to a syndicate headed by F. E. Sharp, formerly superintendent of the Kelvin-Calumet, at Ray, Arizona, F. C. Goodwin, business manager of the Portland *Oregonian*, and T. A. Weston, at a stipulated price of \$1,000,000, of which he had received \$15,000 in cash, would receive \$25,000 the next day, and \$50,000 a month until the entire \$1,000,000 was paid.

Perhaps that was Scotty's most serious error in the technique of achieving free publicity. Evidently he had forgotten that Dr. C. W. Lawton, who had brought Warner Scott back from the brink of the grave after the "battle of Wingate Pass," had held a court judgment for \$1,001.25 against him for several years. But Dr. Lawton had not forgotten.

As soon as Scotty announced that he had received a cash payment on his mine, Dr. Lawton presented the judgment. Scotty laughed merrily, but not for long. Judge Craig, in the Superior Court, committed him to jail for contempt and announced that he could stay there until he paid the judgment or satisfactorily explained what disposition he had made of the cash currently received.

Promptly the grand jury took an interest. It summoned Scotty from his cell to testify. Scotty could not remember what he had done with the thousands even though less than two weeks had elapsed between the date of the reported receipt and Scotty's incarceration. The grand jury bore down. And Scotty cracked.

Let an editorial in the San Francisco *Call* of June 24, 1912, suggest the story:

"Death Valley Scotty has admitted that he is faker. . . . Worse than being a faker, he has been the figurehead in a tremendous swindle, according to testimony he gave before the Los Angeles grand jury. He told the grand jury that the 'hole' in Death Valley was a myth which

had been used for years to fill the pockets of promoters.

"Scotty told the grand jury that the president of a Chicago insurance company grubstaked him for years and that a mining engineer of New York put up \$10,000 for the special train in which Scotty made his spectacular pressagenting trip across the continent a few years ago.

"So the Scotty bubble has burst. . . . He appears, from his testimony before the Los Angeles grand jury, to be a cheat and nothing more. . . ."

Scotty was released from jail and again disappeared from the limelight.



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## CHAPTER XIV



### SCOTTY'S CLAIM TO FAME

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WALTER SCOTT suffered more than a decade of comparative oblivion after 1912. After the collapse of the western mining boom, through the war to end wars, and into the nationally prosperous nineteen-twenties, he had plenty of time to exercise his talents for the personal entertainment of Albert M. Johnson. The public had had a long rest from that form of entertainment.

A new generation, happily unaware of Scotty's accomplishments or even his name, was growing up to read the public prints. Scotty, with keen understanding of gallery-gods and newspaper editors, did not attempt to crash the front pages. He realized that in 1924 the public must be trained anew to the Scotty legend. Wisely, he permitted just a short dispatch to filter over the wires from a desert point where a local correspondent would not be suspected of ulterior purposes.

"Goldfield, Nev., Dec. 31.—The mysterious activities of 'Death Valley Scotty,' celebrated character whose eccentric exploits held the interest of a nation a decade ago has again aroused speculations among his neighbors on the fringe of Death Valley.

"Out on his ranch in Grapevine Canyon where Scotty of late has been raising figs, raisins and a host of semi-tropical fruits, building has started on a large scale. Carloads of lumber have arrived for Scotty. . . .

"The canny Scotty keeps quiet and lets the surmisers surmise. . . . The age-old story of his hidden mine, long since scouted by miners of Southern Nevada, is again at the front. . . ."

That managed to find the back pages of a few newspapers, but the American public was more interested in the rising stock market. Two years passed before another brief dispatch of similar import from Winnemucca, Nevada, prompted the Hearst Service to send Chris Sheerin to find out about it.

Scotty was in the news again. The reported outlay for Scotty's Death Valley home began to increase—to \$800,000, \$1,000,000, \$2,000,000. A little incidental publicity came along. Scotty appeared in Los Angeles as a witness in the divorce action pending between Hans H. W. Jorgensen and Eva Mudge Jorgensen. Mrs. Jorgensen was the "Little Eva" of Buffalo Bill's Show who stood with an apple on her head as a target for Walter Scott's display of marksmanship. Jorgensen testified that his wife had lived for two years at Scotty's ranch on the pretext of writing his biography, but that the book was not written. Jorgensen won a decree when his wife withdrew her suit.

In the meantime the old mine legend was almost forgotten. Scotty cleverly revived it in interviews graciously granted. "I never said I had a mine. I just said I had a hole in the ground."

The publicity, intermittent and not widely circulated, continued as construction of the Death Valley Ranch House continued, waxing and waning through the years 1927-8-9.

Then the stock-market crash of 1929 centered all persons' interest upon their own problems. No one was interested in Scotty or his castle. He made a valiant effort to recover his position in the news by announcing a trip to Paris. But when he reached Chicago the needful tickets and expense account

were not forthcoming from Albert M. Johnson. Johnson had taken a trimming in that market crash.

But Scotty is a resourceful cuss. He did not want to go to Paris anyway. His objective was the front pages. So he climbed back on a train, and cheerfully submitted to an interview in Kansas City. It was promptly sent out over A.P. wires.

"Kansas City, Feb. 4.—Scotty, who is building a \$2,500,000 home in the desert near Tonopah, today declared he had lost a \$6,000,000 fortune. 'Guess I'll have to fire a couple of hundred employees,' he said."

That announcement promptly brought supplementary dispatches. Chicago wires reported that Albert M. Johnson was Scotty's "human gold mine," a financier of millions. The report explained that Johnson had been severely injured in a train wreck some years earlier and had been in extremely bad health when Scotty first encountered him. According to the dispatch, Johnson was so impressed by Scotty's description of the desert that he came west to look it over, and there found such improvement in health, and entertainment in Scotty's stories, that he had maintained the association. A Los Angeles dispatch reported that Scotty's Castle was a millionaire's plaything and Scotty's secrecy was part of the ballyhoo in which Johnson found entertainment.

Enough money had been spent on the castle and grounds by that time to rate newspaper, rotogravure and magazine illustration. There was a \$150,000 music room, \$10,000 stable, \$40,000 bedroom for Scotty, \$50,000 guest house, \$100,000 living room, eighteen fireplaces, enough ties salvaged from the abandoned Bullfrog-Goldfield railroad to keep the home fires burning for seventy-five years.

All those \$-signs and digits decorated the news stories and photographs most effectively. There were hand-adzed red-

wood timbers, hand-wrought iron work, and Florentine leather draperies worked and tooled to the texture of heavy satin. Specially made rugs from Majorca, guest-room bedspreads worthy of a museum of textile work, hand-wrought silver, specially made dishes, unique and antique tables, benches, ornaments, from Italy, Spain and elsewhere were sufficient to make a visitor's eyes pop.

An excavation large enough for a drydock had been scooped out for a swimming pool, and walled with concrete. Enough tiles in the soft and alluring colors of the desert to line a drydock were on hand to line that pool.

Then, abruptly, construction ceased. Of course the fact that Albert M. Johnson had lost a fortune had nothing to do with it. That lode of publicity had been worked out. This was something newer and bigger. It was no less than a conspiracy undertaken by the United States Government.

"I've got my hair in braids," Scotty announced to a reporter for the San Francisco *Chronicle* on March 28, 1931. In Paiute talk, that meant that Scotty was on the war path. "It's the government," he declared. "Why, doggone 'em, they're agoin' to make Death Valley—MY Death Valley—into a so-and-so National Park for dudes. An' they've gone half a mile into my property to do it."

If Scotty was going to war with the United States, it was news. If the federal government was planning to make Death Valley into a national park, that also was news.

Death Valley National Monument was created by Presidential proclamation on February 11, 1933. Scotty and Johnson found themselves in an embarrassing situation. Scotty had claimed all of Death Valley as his private preserve. Johnson had spent a fortune in erecting and furnishing a castle on land to which he assumed Scotty held title. Representative Englebright of Colorado explained the situation to the House of Representatives.

Several years after construction of the castle was started, he said, Johnson had asked Scotty where the deed was filed. "What deed?" said Scotty. That was a little matter that Scotty had overlooked. But no one was grasping at Death Valley real estate in those days. No one objected when a homestead entry was made to cover the castle grounds. No one even noticed when that entry was registered in the wrong township. But Johnson's agent discovered the error, and another attempt was made, based upon a new survey. This time the homestead entry was filed in the right place, but the homestead itself, as defined by the new survey, was six and one-half miles east of the castle. Before that error was discovered the President had withdrawn the land from entry in preparation for establishment of the Death Valley National Monument. The only recourse for Scotty and Johnson was an act of Congress.

Thirteen days after the National Monument was created, the House Public Lands Committee approved a bill to permit Albert M. Johnson to purchase 1,529 acres of desert land, under and around the castle for \$1.25 an acre.

Both Scotty and Johnson were receiving what is sometimes known as the horse-laugh.

Scotty announced that he was all through with the castle. "Just say that I am pulling up stakes and I am going—that is all I care to say just now." He added that when his plans were completed the million-dollar castle would be but a mole hill, compared with what he was thinking of building. "Just say I am sticking to the desert, that's all."

But three months later the wound to his pride was healing. The Associated Press reported that Scotty had decided to put up to Franklin Delano Roosevelt the question of who owned the site of the castle.

"The President has squared a lot of beefs since he took office," Scotty was quoted. "So I am going to give him a

chance to straighten out this muddle of mine. I don't crave to live in a national park along with the buffaloes."

The President "squared" it, all right. The long legal document did not mention the name of Walter Scott.

I have before me a certified copy of that document as filed in the office of the Recorder of Inyo County, California, "Patent Number 1093787, Filed for Record at the request of A. M. Johnson, July 19, 1938, 45 minutes past 9 o'clock A.M."

It states, after a formal technical description of a tract of 1,529 83/100 acres of land, that, "the United States of America, in consideration of the premises, and in conformity with the said Act of Congress in such case made and provided, has given and granted . . . unto the said Albert M. Johnson and to his heirs the Tracts above described. . . . Excepting and reserving, however, to the United States, under the provision of the said Act of August 22, 1935, all the minerals the land may contain, together with the right to prospect for, mine, and remove the same. . . ."

And there is another joker in that document which might, but probably will not, set permanently at rest the popular error that Scotty owns, ever has owned, or ever will own that property. It says, over the hand and seal of Franklin D. Roosevelt:

"This patent is issued upon the express condition . . . that in the event of transfer of title to the whole of this property or any estate therein, by voluntary conveyance or by operation of law, the Secretary of the Interior shall be authorized to reacquire the land by purchase, condemnation, or otherwise out of such funds as may be made available by Congress for this purpose."

In the light of those facts it would seem that the only remaining mystery is why Albert Johnson has been putting up the money to maintain Scotty in the public eye for a third of a century. That probably will remain a mystery despite

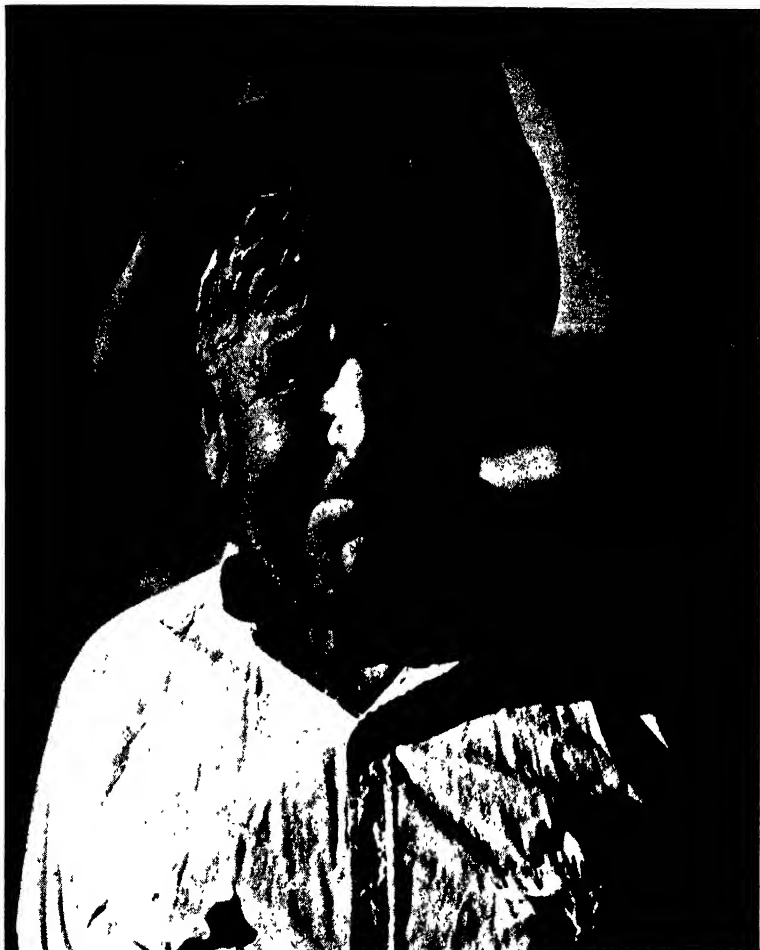
Johnson's widely publicized explanation in a full page Sunday newspaper layout issued by King Features Syndicate in 1937, stating specifically: "I've been paying Scotty's bills for years—and I like it. He repays me in laughs."

Maybe Johnson has not paid too much. He was very ill and very rich when he began the expenditure. He is quite well now, though not so rich.

Key Pittman, sponsoring the Act before the Senate to give Johnson right to purchase the disputed land, put the cost of the castle at "about \$500,000," but added that the work was not yet complete. Scotty prefers a more specific figure—\$2,381,000. His reputation is involved.

The county assessment rolls in Independence put the valuation of land, buildings, light plant, pipe lines, and personal property at less than three per cent of that gross. If orange growers and cotton planters and wheat farmers and manufacturers could get a write-down like that on their assessments it would certainly lighten their burdens.

The castle is bringing in \$1.10 each from thousands of curious visitors every year. The government gets a dime out of that. Johnson gets a dollar. The visitors get their money's worth. It's a good show. Everybody but a few tight-wads whom Scotty describes as "owls" and "bats," gets \$1.10 worth of entertainment and education out of a visit to the castle. There are some rare, beautiful, and otherwise interesting museum pieces in its furnishing. There is rare combination of Moorish, Spanish, Italian, and California Mission architecture in its buildings. There was a wildcat in a cage near the courtyard parking space the last time I was there. There are three tall palm trees which were trucked all the way from San Bernardino and planted to look as natural as life until they literally froze to death right there on the edge of the ground afire. There is an imposing clock tower, with chimes, somewhat out of tune, as is also the huge pipe organ.



*Courtesy of "Westways." © 1989.*

Walter ("Death Valley Scotty") Scott, posed before the Castle. When this photograph was taken he was either seventy years old, according to his elder brother Warner; sixty-seven, according to Albert M. Johnson, his financial backer; sixty-three, according to a niece who lives in his birth town of Cynthiana, Ky., or something else, according to whom you ask.





*Frashers Photos, Pomona, California. Courtesy Death Valley Hotel Company.*

Bird's-eye view of "Scotty's Castle," in Grapevine Canyon, three miles from Death Valley's floor and 2,000 feet above it. At extreme left, the clock tower, with chimes; next, the main building with unfinished swimming pool partly filled with cloudburst rubble in front; guest-house back against the hill at extreme right; powerhouse and garage in foreground.

There are some marvelous examples of the wood-worker's art. There is a huge old gray burro which ambles around with an aura of local color, occasionally competing with the chimes, and graciously accepting an apple from a tourist's lunch. There are a few Filipino boys who keep things dusted. Scotty calls them "damn' Portygees." There is a name carved over the main door. It doesn't say "Scotty's Castle." It is "Death Valley Ranch."

Scotty has never slept in his \$40,000 bedroom. He prefers his "shack" at "the lower Vine," a comfortable modern bungalow a few minutes' ride by automobile over a road rough enough to discourage tourists, even if the gates were unlocked, which they seldom are. "The lower Vine" is outside the 1,529 acres of the castle grounds and environs. It was originally known as Steininger's Ranch. It was more latterly known as West's Ranch, Scotty's Ranch, Hunter's Ranch, Johnson's Ranch. Bev and Ruth L. Hunter acquired it from Ben H. Yandell of Bishop a number of years ago, and on Nov. 25, 1927, conveyed it to Albert M. Johnson.

Scotty is more likely to be in residence there than at the castle. He likes to cook. He is a notable artist at either a campfire or a range. Some three years ago he was entertaining a representative of a leading popular magazine of national circulation who was in position to give him wider and more flattering publicity than he had enjoyed for some time. He invited four other friends of many years' standing to have Thanksgiving dinner with him. He took the magazine writer on a highspeed automobile trip over one hundred miles of desert road to Tonopah to do the marketing. He bought \$350 worth of supplies.

He served two turkeys for six persons. One of the women in the party, who had known Scotty for more than thirty years, remarked on that. "Oh," said Scotty, "you can never tell about turkeys. One of 'em might be bad."

The magazine writer produced a very entertaining and profusely illustrated story. The circulation was advertised at more than two million copies. The same amount of space purchased for display advertising would have cost approximately \$50,000. Scotty got it for \$350 worth of groceries.

When publicity wanes for a time Scotty announces that the castle is for sale. Then another magazine "breaks" the story, complete with photographs, errors and contradictions.

A favorite tale of how Scotty, with the deep sympathy of a generous and kindly heart, shot a sweet old couple to save them from dying of thirst in Death Valley, is moved into the Panamint Mountains where the sweet old couple becomes two horny-handed prospectors, one dead, one dying of thirst, and Scotty ends the agony of the dying man with a merciful bullet. The public likes that story. Johnson gets a wonderful kick out of it.

When Scotty gets into court, as he did in the contempt proceedings in 1912, and in his wife's suit for \$2,500 a month separate maintenance allowance compromised at \$100 a month, in 1937, and Albert Johnson states that, "Scotty hasn't a dime that he can call his own," the impact of fact is promptly lost in more resounding fiction.

"Now about the gold," says Scotty. "I never claimed I had a mine. I said long ago and so do today, I know of places I could get gold. I have about seven hundred thousand or near around that cached away in the mountains. It is in the rock. So I can't be arrested for hoarding. I have a miniature mill of my own. I can grind it up whenever I get ready."

Happily, human beings can believe about what they want to believe. Witness the amazing financial successes of new religious and sociological cults. Witness the devotion of Russians to Stalin, of Germans to Hitler, of Italians to Mussolini.

With reference to Scotty, they prefer to believe that he

can grind \$700,000 in gold out of the rocks of Death Valley with a miniature mill whenever he needs it. Isn't the castle there to prove it? They go to take a look. If they have the good luck to encounter Scotty in person they are overjoyed. Scotty is a solid chunk of tangible evidence with shrewd blue eyes, a winning grin when he happens to be in a good humor, and a bulging waist-line. If the visitors happen to see Albert M. Johnson, they note only a slender, white-haired, fine-featured gentleman who would never be suspected of having paid \$2,000,000 for a laugh. Or is it \$3,000,000?

No matter. They decline to part with their illusions. It is just as well. Illusions seem necessary to keep the human race from going completely crazy. Scotty has done a noble work for the benefit of mankind. Do not fail to see it.

Incidentally, you can see Death Valley, which was there before Scotty. It is worth seeing also. Borax Smith's railroad first made it available to persons whose only business there was the satisfaction of their curiosity. It arrived a little too late to save the excited copper camp of Greenwater. But it could not have saved Greenwater if it had been a year earlier.

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## CHAPTER XV

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### GREENWATER

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THE history of Greenwater, high in the Black Mountains overlooking Death Valley, has never been recorded adequately in print. I approach the task with some misgiving, for Greenwater was the scene of my own introduction to the varied delights of mining-camp life in the Death Valley region in 1906. I may be prejudiced, but I should like to do it justice.

My partner, Curt E. Kunze, and I were newspaper men—or rather cubs—fresh from a year's experience with the San Francisco *Examiner* which had included the days of the San Francisco earthquake and fire. We entered Greenwater with a total capital of \$35.35. A few months later we calculated we could cash in for \$10,000. We did not try it. We were having too much fun. Within a year we dead-headed out to Johnny's Siding on the L. V. & T. with Alkali Bill Brong, who owed us passage for advertising "Alkali Bill's Death Valley Chug Line."

We managed to make our way to San Francisco and find jobs. Of course we were coming back the minute the Schwab Merger began to produce copper ore instead of stock certificates. So were two thousand other persons.

Thirty-one years passed before I returned, and still the Greenwater-Death Valley Copper Mines and Smelting Company had produced no copper. Neither had any one of the

forty-seven companies whose names appear in a copy of the Death Valley *Chuckwalla* now before me. I was square in the middle of Greenwater before I knew it.

The terrain was familiar, but where was Salsberry Avenue, or Main Street? Where was Nielson's Combination, or the place across the street where Teddy had joined with Tiger Lil in singing a belated "Nearer My God to Thee" for the funeral of Billy Robinson, whom I had so carefully prepared for his last rest? Where was Still Wandell's, and the Greenwater Brokerage Company next door, and the sheet iron bulk of the Greenwater Banking Corporation's original home? Where was Murphy Brothers and Conway's, "Biggest Stores at Greenwater and Furnace"; Bob Brogelman's Greenwater Mercantile Company; Brin and Bernstein's, "Everything for the Miner, Prospector and the Home"; the Greenwater Meat Company, "We Trail Cattle Across Death Valley"?

Where were the blackened ruins of our Death Valley *Chuckwalla* and Greenwater *Miner* printing plant? There must have been some powerful souvenir-hunters here to have carried away that 1,200-pound Chandler & Price job press, that 1,000-pound steel paper cutter, that 400-pound Washington hand press.

Later on I was to find the big job press, on which the tenth and final issue of the Death Valley *Chuckwalla* had been printed shortly before the plant burned down, honorably installed in the garden of Furnace Creek Inn. It had stood amid the encroaching sagebrush of abandoned Greenwater for a quarter of a century before Miss Katherine Roman, manager of the Inn, hearing that it was about to be removed by a Southern California collector of relics, sent a truck to place it in a Death Valley setting which seemed right and proper. I am grateful for that. I am grateful also to Jack Bullinger, manager of the Death Valley View Hotel,

who, at a recent California Newspaper Publishers Association convention there, presented me with a fire-warped piece of the typewriter on which I had written much of the *Chuckwalla*. He had found it in the debris while there was still sufficient debris to identify the spot.

That burned and broken piece of typewriter recalls an interesting psychological and economic reaction of the morning following the fire. I had felt no sense of loss in the fire. The outfit had cost us nothing, though I believe Major J. F. A. Strong, who freighted it in to print the *Greenwater Miner*, had been paid some \$2,000 for it. We had a comfortable three-room house also, and a couple of town lots, and a bank account and many shares of mining stock. But none of those things seemed to have cost money. They had simply showered down on top of our original \$35.35. Let 'em burn! There was more where they had come from. Greenwater was going to be greater than Butte.

But that typewriter! I had paid for that typewriter with the sweat of my brain through ten and one-half months at ten dollars a month. When I saw it cooling in the ashes next morning, I realized abruptly and completely that we had suffered a loss. Curt's reference to the outhouse, which had not burned, as our only remaining asset, failed to console me for the loss of that typewriter.

Greenwater was an interesting place not only to two such callow youths as were C. E. Kunze and C. B. Glasscock upon their arrival in the autumn of 1906. It was interesting to such men as John Hays Hammond, Charles M. Schwab, William Andrews Clark, J. Ross Clark, Patsy Clark, F. Augustus Heinze, Malcolm Macdonald, Donald Gillis, John Brock. Those were names known throughout the mining and financial world. With men like those putting their money into the ground, into development, into the issue and sale of mining stock, no camp could fail.

And there were other men whose names were as well known in the throbbing, booming Nevada camps of the day as the names of Hammond, Schwab, the Clarks and Heinze were known in Wall Street. There were Jack Salsberry, Harry Ramsey, Tasker L. Oddie, and numerous others who had made fortunes in Tonopah, Goldfield and Rhyolite. With all that money and backing available, Greenwater's future seemed assured. Copper camps were permanent. Look at Butte, Montana. Butte had been mining and building through thirty years. Butte had produced one billion dollars worth of copper and was well along on its second billion. Greenwater was to be bigger and better than Butte.

Arthur Kunze had more to do with its launching than any other one man. Arthur Kunze, with his older brothers Max and Ewald, and his younger brother Curt and sister Linna, had come with their parents from Saxony and settled in Illinois in the 'eighties. The Tonopah mining excitement had lured him to the desert. He had found little profit in the Nevada camps, and had prospected on into the eastern barriers of Death Valley.

A small spring in a crevice high on the hills, capable of producing a few gallons of green-tinged water a day had given the name of Greenwater to its section of the Black Mountains at an altitude of a mile above Death Valley. The spring had made the region something of a rendezvous for prospectors. Five miles away in a steep and narrow canyon Arthur Kunze found some green-stained outcroppings. He put up a location monument, slipped a specimen into his shoulder sack, and went his way.

Back in Tonopah that specimen assayed a high percentage of copper. Arthur Kunze sent Bud Van Patton and Al Cook to make more locations. That was in the spring of 1904.

Copper mining and refining was known to require heavy



investment. Arthur Kunze found it extremely difficult to excite the silver- and gold-conscious Tonopah and Goldfield about an unproved copper claim more than 150 miles from the nearest railroad. It took him two years to do it.

By that time the booming Nevada camps had convinced the United States that there were vast, quick, and easy fortunes to be made in the desert. Stock in almost anything that was called a mine could be sold. Judge Peters of Tonopah managed to interest some eastern clients in Greenwater. They agreed upon a purchase price for the Greenwater Copper Company, and wired the money to Nye & Ormsby County Bank. In the meantime, Jack Salsberry, then president of the Tonopah Lumber Company, and one of the leading men in desert mine development, had heard of the Peters deal, and was interested.

When an error in the spelling of Arthur Kunze's name in the telegram to the bank resulted in delivery of notice to the wrong person, and a consequent delay of many hours, Jack Salsberry met Kunze in the Mizpah Club, and made a deal. Kunze held power-of-attorney for the associates who had helped to finance the enterprise during the long delay. MacAllister and his friends objected to the deal, but since their power-of-attorney was recorded in the county seat of Independence, and that was a long journey from Tonopah, the deal with Jack Salsberry was concluded.

Salsberry provided a six-horse team and wagon loaded with camp and mining equipment, \$2,000 in money, and a pledge to meet the payroll. Kunze, with eight men, made the 175-mile desert journey into the Black Mountains. That started Greenwater. It was not on the site of the later expanding town but in the narrow canyon two miles away by trail or four miles by wagon road, where the original locations were made. Locally, in Nevada, that camp was called Kunze, though its post office was officially Greenwater. When John

Hays Hammond made his favorable report, Greenwater was the name to conjure with on the mining stock exchanges. The original camp of Kunze moved over to the neighboring camp of Ramsey, where there would be room to grow to a city greater than Butte. The first issue of the *Death Valley Chuckwalla*, dated January 1, 1907, was mailed from a post office on wheels stuck in a chuck-hole half way between the old site and the new.

In the meantime everyone in Nevada and some most important persons in Wall Street and in Butte were hearing of the new copper camp. In June of 1906, Kunze, Salsberry, et al., sold the original Greenwater Copper Company to Malcolm Macdonald and Donald Gillies, presumably representing Butte capitalists, for some thousands of dollars in cash and a great many thousands of dollars worth of stock in the enterprise. Al Cook, who owned a one-fifth interest because of his location work for Kunze, preferred money to mining stock. Smart boy, Al. He held out for \$40,000 cash. Macdonald and Gillies obtained the money from the John S. Cook & Company Bank in Goldfield, and paid it over. That much money for a one-fifth interest in an undeveloped mining prospect was news even in Goldfield. The boom was on. The Tonopah *Bonanza* announced to the mining world that it was the greatest stampede out of Goldfield since Bullfrog.

Phil Creasor, who had found the Republic Mine in Washington for Patsy Clark of Spokane, with a gross profit of \$4,000,000, to Clark, was already in the Greenwater district with Fred Birney, prospecting for Clark. They located the claims on which the townsite of Furnace was based, three or four miles from the original Greenwater. There was a townsite but never a town. Sidney Norman was the townsite agent. Later he was mining editor of the *Los Angeles Times*.

All the water used in Greenwater had to be hauled in over forty miles of rough desert road, and distributed in

barrels. In all the history of the camp water never cost less than ten cents a gallon. Judge L. O. Ray, who still lives in Beatty, promoted a company to pump water up the forty-mile-long mile-high slope from the Amargosa bottoms. He put a large sum of his own money and the money of his associates—\$200,000 in all—into pipe and labor before the enterprise collapsed with the camp. Lumber was never less than \$150 per thousand board feet. A loaf of bread was never less than twenty-five cents. Ham and eggs cost one dollar. A small drink of whisky cost twenty-five cents and a glass of beer not much larger retailed at the same price. Any labor in which board was not included as part of the wage, drew double the scale paid in other camps. Still the money was coming in from the capitalists, and to a lesser extent from speculating stock-buyers throughout the country. Greenwater boomed, in fact and fancy. In addition to the names of the big-shot capitalists interested, there were just enough such stories as Al Cook's sale of his holdings for \$40,000 cash, and the "Furnace Creek Kid's" profit of \$5,000 at the age of nineteen, to make the camp appeal to desert men.

Numerous desert dwellers know the "Furnace Creek Kid." He was Ed Bahten, born in Daggett, August 21, 1887, and reared in the mining camps. He acquired his nickname while working for the borax company at Furnace Creek Ranch. When the first rush started to Greenwater, he found a job with Arthur Kunze, and incidentally located some claims for himself. He sold the claims for \$5,000 and promptly fancied himself a mining man. With a picturesque moniker and \$5,000, he advertised Greenwater widely. The luckiest accidents produced the most swaggering mining men in those days.

All the customary appurtenances of promising mining camps quickly assembled in Greenwater. One of the first necessities, of course, was a newspaper. Messrs. Brown and

Reber appeared from Salt Lake City with a dilapidated job-printing plant which they set up in a tent and announced as the home of the *Greenwater Times*, to be published weekly, at a subscription rate of six dollars a year. It was a unique sheet, printed in Salt Lake City, with a patent inside and some peculiar journalism outside. Witness one or two excerpts.

"The Metzger saloon is emblazoning its inviting invitation on Main Street, long and loud. As the flame flickers it can be seen."

"Alkali Bill is in charge of the Death Valley Chug Line—autos—and makes daily connections with the front. He generally goes out empty and comes back loaded."

That did not seem to be doing quite all a newspaper should do for a rising mining camp, so Major J. F. A. Strong, who had published the *Nome Nugget* at fifty cents a copy printed on wallpaper during the first winter of the Nome rush, appeared with a plant capable of printing a newspaper on the scene. That was the *Greenwater Miner*, a publication worthy of its field. When Major Strong saw the handwriting on the wall a little earlier than some others, C. E. Kunze and C. B. Glasscock acquired the plant and paper, and continued publication. Their Death Valley *Chuckwalla* in the meantime had extended its circulation into every state in the Union, with a boasted twenty subscribers in Wall Street, and half a dozen in Brookline, Massachusetts. The *Chuckwalla*, local brokers assured us and proved their confidence by paying for advertising space, really sold stock. We were very proud of that at the time. We believed whole-heartedly in *Greenwater*. I am a little ashamed now as I look over the vainglorious announcements and arrogant assertions in its pages.

In an area of a few dozen acres of which I knew every foot in 1906-7, it requires two hours of wandering in 1939, to find even the site of our home. Greenwater is not even a ghost town. It is a few heaps of bottles, a few caved-in cellars and vaults, a few rusted sheet-iron heaters, almost hidden by sagebrush and greasewood. Dozens of more or less substantial frame buildings and scores of board and canvas structures have not left even a mark upon the desert. It seemed impossible. I inquired about it later from desert men who have remained in the Death Valley region through the years. The explanation was simple enough. Dad Fairbanks bought most of the buildings when the camp had been finally abandoned, and moved them away to his own growing settlement at Shoshone, or elsewhere. Mike Murphy, of Murphy Brothers and Conway, "Biggest Stores at Greenwater and Furnace," had removed everything else that was salable. The obliteration was complete and final.

Even the bottle heaps have been picked over and stripped of the clear glass, colored amethyst by decades of desert sun. The only way in which I can find the site of the home of the *Chuckwalla* publishers is by working out from a broken slab of flat stone in a wooden frame which can be identified as the imposing-stone of Brown & Reber's dilapidated job plant. It must have been Brown & Reber's plant because the *Chuckwalla's* and the *Miner's* had burned. Brown & Reber's tent was only two hundred feet below the *Chuckwalla* residence. That comes to memory because on a summer's day in 1907 I was roundly denounced by Mr. Brown for shooting a huge rattlesnake outside his tent within about six feet of his startled ear. It was one of the only two rattlesnakes I ever saw in Greenwater.

Between the *Times* tent and the *Chuckwalla* residence stood the frame post office building. Back of the post office was what later came to be known as a Chick Sales, of more

than average size because of the necessity of accommodating post office trade. Yes, here is the caved-in vault, large enough to be unmistakable. And a hundred feet up the gentle slope should be a chipmunk colony where we trapped game for our black cat, "Chuck," and our white cat, "Walla," and where I first encountered that rattlesnake. Yes, here are the chipmunk holes. At the center of that triangle stood the *Chuckwalla* house. There is not even a scratch on the ground. Occasional rains, and snow, and persistent sun have combined with the returning desert growth to obliterate every mark. That is the story of nearly all of Greenwater. Of course the mining shafts, and the huge dumps, most of which are two miles over an abandoned trail at the site of the original locations are not quite so completely hidden, but time is doing the job quite thoroughly.

Yet two thousand men and a score of women did call for their mail at the Greenwater post office, and we did have fun. When wives and sisters of storekeepers and other substantial citizens came in, there were occasional dances. The highlight of Greenwater's social life, however, was the stag banquet arranged in honor of Mr. William Dehy, then district attorney of Inyo County in which Greenwater was situated, and now, as for many years, Judge of the Superior Court of his county. Sheriff Naylor was also a guest of honor.

It was a three or four days' trip from the county seat at Independence to Greenwater, on the opposite side of Death Valley. Of course Greenwater felt properly honored by the announcement that the sheriff and district attorney were planning to make that sort of trip to pay it an official call. A banquet was arranged to be served on the huge back porch of Nielson's Combination Saloon which boasted an adjoining restaurant that could do the catering. There was time also to move the roulette wheels and faro layouts and stud-poker tables from the various saloons as a gracious concession to

officials who were not supposed to countenance such things in California.

It was a swell banquet. Most of the elite of Greenwater who were not working on night shifts were there. Major Strong was toastmaster. Among the guests was Frederick R. Beckdolt, who had been sent by the *Los Angeles Times* to cover the story of a party of Nevada bigwigs currently lost in Death Valley. The Greenwater Meat Company brought in some selected steers for the steaks. The tables were decorated with bouquets of desert flowers in fruit jars. There was liquor, and speeches, and everything.

When Mr. Dehy finished a speech in which he expressed all the great expectations which he shared with the pioneer residents of our thriving city assembled to do him honor, the applause was deafening. Not content with applause, some of the most enthusiastic banqueters tried to shower the speaker with flowers. Blossoms, singly and some in tightly bound bunches, filled the air. The banquet broke up in a good-natured riot.

Only Major Strong, who was a dignified man, and felt his responsibilities as official host, was thoroughly disgusted. The district attorney and sheriff diplomatically withdrew. Next day the guests of honor started back to Independence, the gambling paraphernalia was replaced in the saloons, and Greenwater resumed the even tenor of its way. One of its outstanding later social events was the funeral of Billy Robinson.

Billy Robinson was the printer we had acquired with the *Greenwater Miner*. Like most of the tramp printers of his day he was a heavy drinker. With the *Chuckwalla* printing added to the *Miner* printing and occasional job work, Billy could not carry the load, even though Kunze and I learned to stick type and compose our literary effusions at the case without benefit of typewriter. That was when we lured

Harry Glasscock from San Francisco to take charge of the plant. After our fire, when we printed temporarily in Los Angeles and Rhyolite, there was nothing left for Billy to do but drink. He devoted himself to that with enthusiasm.

A reasonable number of so-called bar-flies were welcomed around mining camp saloons. It was the practice of men who had just launched a new company or sold a claim or otherwise contributed to the prosperity of a camp to toast their success at the nearest bar. Not far, each bar. In an expansive mood, the host would call up all the loungers to join in the libation. The more loungers, the more drinks. The more drinks, the more profit. Billy did so well that he developed delirium tremens and died in his tent on the outskirts of the camp.

Someone came to me and asked if I would lay Billy out, and conduct the funeral. Greenwater was not so busy by that time, but there was no one else who wanted the job. Billy had rather messed himself up in his final losing battle with the red devils. But I had liked Billy, so I agreed. Three or four miners, off shift, volunteered to dig the grave in the little cemetery which already held three bodies. The lumber company donated boards and a carpenter to form them into a coffin. A bartender donated the packing from a barrel of bottled beer with which to pad the coffin. A clean white sheet was provided to line it chastely. Another bartender collected and donated the needed presentable clothing.

When I had him laid out on a makeshift slab in his tent, washed and dressed for his final public appearance in a manner to do credit to Greenwater, the Tiger Lily came in for a farewell glimpse. Tiger Lil, as she had been known from Pioche to Tonopah to Goldfield to Rhyolite to Greenwater, was a tall, willowy, slightly wilted gal, with flaming red hair, a flaming disposition, and enough freckles to complete justification of the name.



She looked the exhibit over critically. Instead of crossing the hands according to the convention of professional mining camp undertakers, I had placed the left arm at the side, and arranged the right hand gracefully upon the breast. I was rather proud of the effect. As Tiger Lil looked down upon the dead man for a long time without speaking, my pride began to falter. Abruptly it was restored and augmented.

"Poor Billy," said Tiger Lil. "He sure does look natural. That was just the way he held a poker hand."

Without another word, she turned away and walked down the slope toward her cabin near the lumber yard at the lower end of town where a warm red glow from half a dozen similar cabins and canvas-covered frame buildings welcomed the evening stage. Encouraged by her approval, I completed the lining of the coffin and found someone to help place the body within. As we finished, Tiger Lil reappeared.

"Go on out, kid," she said. "You done a good job. I'll finish it."

In another minute she left the tent, and walked away. I went in for a final look. In Billy's fingers, held close to his breast, was a poker hand. Gently, I removed the cards to see what Tiger Lil had felt to be suitable to the situation. There were five aces. Gently, I replaced them.

The funeral was to be held next morning. It was strictly a community affair. No one else had been buried in Greenwater with such interest and ceremony.

A young divinity student whose urgent search for health had brought him to the desert mountains as a clerk in Bob Brogelman's Greenwater Mercantile Company, had volunteered to read a service. One of Billy's bartender friends drove the funeral wagon. Tiger Lil and the bartender's special girl friend, Teddy, rode with him. Most of the other residents of the town walked across the half mile of sage-strewn slope to the open grave.

The service was read, amid reverential silence. The reader's young wife lifted her voice in "Nearer My God, to Thee." The Tiger Lily and Teddy stood with bowed heads, silent. When the first clods had fallen upon the coffin, they climbed to the wagon seat.

Greenwater felt that it had accomplished something, with grace and dignity. It was some ten hours later before Tiger Lil and Teddy, having had a few drinks with friends in one of the saloons, announced that they could sing "Nearer My God, to Thee" far better than it had been sung at the grave. The group before the bar joyfully boosted them to its top. And the gals proved their contention.

That proved to be a memorable night in the history of the camp. Quite soon thereafter, some of the mine development ceased. No more outside money was coming in. Greenwater residents began to find their way out to the T. & T. Railroad, which by that time had reached the Lila C. Mine, only thirty miles away. The panic of 1907 gave Greenwater its *coup de grâce*.

Only the United Greenwater had so much money in its treasury from the sale of stock that it could continue work indefinitely. Dad Fairbanks' feed yard, liquor and general merchandise store, and one mine boarding house continued in operation for two or three years. Still, the expensive, three-compartment shafts, sunk at a cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars to depths as great as 1,600 feet, never managed to reach substantial ore bodies.

United Greenwater moved its operations to a promising prospect at Dale, in San Bernardino County. Dad Fairbanks closed his place and began to move the deserted Greenwater buildings to Shoshone. The United Greenwater Company operated at Dale for four years, and still had money in its treasury. It took four years more, from 1915 to 1919, to sink the last of that money in a lease at Tonopah.

Thus ended Greenwater. It was a great camp in its mo-

ment. Death Valley sunsets spanned the entire heaven above it. Death Valley itself was visible from a point only twenty minutes' walk from Greenwater's first location monument, a monument so heavy in copper that it was shipped with numerous others to be smelted into almost the only metal that Greenwater ever produced.

The old-timers still believe that the copper is there, in quantities to surpass Butte, if only the price were sufficient to lure the shafts downward a few hundred more feet.

It is extremely difficult to discourage desert men who have once owned and sold a mining claim.

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## CHAPTER XVI



### SKIDOO

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ALMOST simultaneously with Greenwater in the history of Death Valley country came Skidoo, on the opposite side of the ground afire. Enough of Skidoo is still there to make identification easy. It is available from the oiled road that turns south from the Towne's Pass entrance to Death Valley, through Emigrant Canyon. Or if one comes in on the Trona-Ballarat road, Skidoo can be reached on a short spur from Pete Auguerreberry's mine at what is known as Harrisburg.

Pete says it isn't really Harrisburg, but Harrisberry. He is a little touchy about that. He discovered it, but, as usual when Shorty Harris had anything to do with a promising prospect, Shorty got credit, if not much cash.

Pete Auguerreberry is a French Basque whose name identifies the finest viewpoint on the Panamint rim of Death Valley. Pete discovered the point and built the first road to it. He is a competent, wiry, courteous man who has lived upon that height for thirty-five busy years. He was hardly more than a boy when he reached the spot on July 4, 1905. He had been prospecting all the way down from Tonopah.

In the early summer he arrived with his burros at Furnace Creek Ranch. Shorty Harris happened to be there enjoying the hospitality of Ed Munsey, who had succeeded Jimmie Dayton. The weather was hot. Pete and Shorty decided to

pull out for the cooler altitudes of the Panamints. Shorty wanted to go to Ballarat for supplies, and some convivial mingling with his kind upon the Fourth of July. Pete wanted to find a gold mine.

The two men drove their burros westward across Death Valley from Furnace Creek Ranch over the narrow corduroy trail which had been laid to keep men and animals from bogging down in the swamp on that route. They climbed the steep Blackwater Canyon and came out upon the easier, cooler slopes at an altitude of five thousand feet. They expected to camp that night at Wildrose Spring, a popular rendezvous of prospectors, and a regular overnight stop on the trail from Furnace Creek to Ballarat.

Shorty and his burros were in the lead when Pete and his burros started to climb a short steep slope beside an outcropping ledge. Something in the ledge caught Pete's eye. He paused, and knocked a piece of rock loose with his hand pick. Rusty yellow-red specks looking as if they had been sprayed into the rock in molten form, greeted his eye.

"Hi, Shorty!" he yelled.

"Come on, Pete. It's Fourth of July. We're goin' to Ballarat."

"Wait a minute, Shorty. I got somep'n here."

"Jesus Christ, it's Fourth of July, Pete," and Shorty plodded on toward Wildrose.

But there was promise of greater celebrations in Pete Auguerreberry's hand than anything Ballarat could offer. He tarried, and broke off more samples. His eyes were shining much more brilliantly than the rust-colored gold in the rock. He shouted again, but Shorty ambled on. After selecting the best of his samples Pete followed.

Two or three other prospectors were camped at Wildrose. Pete wanted to show his samples to Shorty, but he did not want to show them to the others.

After a time he managed to get Shorty aside and insisted that he look at the samples.

"Jesus-Christ-Fourth-of-July-Petel" said Shorty. "Where did you get this?"

"Back there where I yelled for you to stop," said Pete. "It's plenty rich, ain't it, Shorty? You're in on it too. We'll dodge these other fellows someway in the morning and get back there and put up our monuments."

"We're about out o' grub, Pete," said Shorty, taking Pete into partnership. "We got to go on to Ballarat for grub. It's Fourth of July. These other fellers'll get drunk. We can get our grub and come back."

"Somebody might find it," Pete protested.

"Hell," said Shorty, "fellers have been jackassin' through there for years an' never seen it. I never seen it even myself. We gotta eat. We'll come right back from Ballarat with grub, an' have time to pick out the good ground. It'll be better'n Bullfrog. They screwed me in Bullfrog. All I ever got out of Bullfrog was seven hundred dollars. Jesus-Christ-Fourth-of-July-Petel Nobody's goin' to screw me on this."

"Better'n Bullfrog," said Pete. "What'll we name it? Auguerreberg, would be a good name, wouldn't it, Shorty."

"I'll look it over, soon's we get back from Ballarat with grub," said Shorty. "We'll figure out a good name. But first we got to get our monuments up."

Three days later they were back on the ground. They followed the outcrop up the slope and traced it on the opposite side of the ridge. Shorty took more samples and approved them.

"You take this side and I'll take the other," Pete offered.

Shorty agreed. They paced off the ground and erected location monuments. They decided to call the camp Harrisberry. After all, Shorty's name and Shorty's showmanship had some cash value in promoting a new mining camp in

1905. Pete appreciated that. With their work half done they had to go back to Wildrose Spring to camp. Pete exacted a promise from Shorty to say nothing about it if they found other prospectors at Wildrose.

Regretfully Pete left "Harrisberry" to the shades of night, and ambled back to Wildrose Spring, arriving just in time to hear Shorty Harris, his promise forgotten in his overpowering desire for the limelight, announce to the few men camped around the spring that he had just put up his monuments upon the richest gold ledge in the entire desert. "I tell you the short man has got somp'n this time. Bigger than Bullfrog."

He displayed his specimens in evidence. Pete Auguerreberry stood outside the light of the campfires, outraged, but helpless.

"They'll be a thousand men in Harrisburg in a month," said Shorty. "Ten thousand in a year."

"I thought we agreed to call it Harrisberry," Pete put into the grandiose announcement.

"Jesus-Christ-Fourth-of-July-Pete!" said Shorty. "It's gonna be the biggest camp ever in this desert."

Next day the prospectors camped at Wildrose Spring started the rush to the point of Pete's discovery and Shorty's preemption. Pete did what he could in the way of staking more ground for his friends. Then he journeyed happily out to record the locations. When he returned, the rush was on. It was not the biggest camp ever in the desert. At its peak, Harrisberry, already popularized as Harrisburg and now on the maps under that name, boasted three hundred population. Only Pete Auguerreberry, of those three hundred, remains. If you are interested in gold mines you can find it on the upper edge of what is known as Harrisburg Flats. Only a few miles away is Skidoo.

Harry Ramsey, whose name must stand near the top of

those who made Nevada famous in its last mad decade, and One-Eye Thompson were on their way to the booming Harrisburg when they lost their way in a fog, and found the ledges that brought forth Skidoo. Yes, the variety of weather in the Death Valley country even includes fogs, though not many. Only two in the last thirty-five years have been sufficiently dense to play a part in Death Valley's history.

When Ramsey and Thompson reached Harrisburg after the fog had lifted they no longer had much interest in it. They had found what they believed to be a better prospect half a dozen miles to the northeast. As soon as Ramsey's name was circulated as sponsor of a new camp, that camp was assured of popular attention. Bob Montgomery, who was the leading citizen of Bullfrog at the moment, hurried down through Daylight Pass, across Death Valley, and up Emigrant Canyon to a tiny basin upon the mile-high shoulder of Tucki Mountain.

The names of Harry Ramsey and Bob Montgomery promptly attracted prospectors, promoters, miners, saloon-keepers, store-keepers and hangers-on to make a town. Half a dozen promising mines were located before the town even had a name. The leading townsmen met to supply the need. Someone suggested Ramsey. But there was already a camp called Ramsey in the Greenwater district. Bob Montgomery and Steve Hovic declined the use of their names. Then Montgomery dropped the remark that he planned to pipe water into the new camp from Telescope Peak, twenty-three miles away. In the slang of the day, "twenty-three" meant "skidoo" and "skidoo" meant approximately what "scram" means today.

The consensus was to name the camp Skidoo. For a time it prospered greatly. Bob Montgomery made good with the promise of water. That was a great help. Skidoo, at an altitude of 5,680 feet, enjoyed a comfortable all-year climate.



Also Skidoo really had some gold mines sufficient to warrant the building of mills for the reduction of their ore.

Skidoo not only produced a little gold and silver, but sold a little mining stock. Any incorporated mining company in any camp on the California-Nevada desert could sell a little mining stock in those days, especially if it had some alluring names in its directorate.

Extracts from an advertisement of The Skidoo Contact Mining Company which appeared in the Death Valley *Chuckwalla* of May 15, 1907, reveal the popular formula:

"Follow Schwab to Skidoo, the new Gold Camp of 1907. Its Startling Strikes the Season's Sensations. . . . Here at Skidoo are properties that promise to rival the riches of the Mohawk. . . . The procession Skidooward is being led by Schwab and Montgomery, two of the richest and most successful mine operators of Nevada. . . . The only Skidoo stock on the market today is the Skidoo Contact Mining Co. at 15 cents a share. The property of this Company consists of five claims immediately joining the rich Schwab-Montgomery Skidoo Mine. . . . Active development is in progress. . . . Values of \$200 in gold have been secured. The officers of the company are well known residents of the Bullfrog Mining District, whose integrity and ability as mining and business men can be easily investigated. They form a combination which assures every stockholder that every honest, intelligent effort will be made to make an eminent success of this proposition. . . .

"Officers.—Pres., and Treas., O. O. Kincaid, Cashier, John S. Cook & Co. Bank; V.-Pres., J. W. Sellers, prominent mine owner and operator in Goldfield and Bullfrog Districts; Sec'y., E. T. W. Weyle, Mining Broker.

"If you are interested send for full particulars and free map of Nevada to Weyle, Rose & Co., Fiscal Agents, Rhyolite, Nevada."

Though such advertisements, leaning heavily upon the

name of Charles M. Schwab, who had really put considerable money into the development of Tonopah and Goldfield, and taken some out, Skidoo had enough of a boom to attract a population of seven hundred, to warrant a post office, and to earn a place on the map and in the history of Death Valley. Two or three small groups of leasers are still hoisting and shipping ore from time to time. On the door of the most prominent remaining building, is posted a legal notice announcing that the Silver Ball and Gold Rock claims, formally described, are the property of Wm. B. Gray, Helene E. Gray, Howard Gray. Wm. B. Gray, who is known by the honorary title of Judge in Beatty, now owns most of Skidoo.

The panic of 1907 put the skids under Skidoo. It is more widely known now because of a murder and lynching which took place there in April, 1908, than for its gold production. The *Skidoo News* devoted three thousand words to the complete coverage of that story. A mining camp newspaper in the days of its prosperity reflects the spirit of its locale more accurately than could any other medium. This story should be told with extracts from the original under the *Skidoo News* headlines:

**"MURDER IN CAMP  
MURDERER LYNCHED  
WITH GENERAL APPROVAL**

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**"JOE SIMPSON SHOOTS JIM ARNOLD DEAD  
AND IS HANGED BY CITIZENS**

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"The disturbance which has shaken this community to the roots in the past two days, opened on Sunday morning last, when Joe Simpson, familiarly known as Joe 'Hootch' (that being his favorite beverage) held up the Southern Calif. Bank here, for the nimble sum of twenty dollars, that being the sum of his immediate need. He was overpowered before he could collect, and his gun

was taken from him. He returned to the bank (which is located in the store) again and became very abusive. Jim Arnold, managing partner in the store finally put him out. Three hours later, he returned with his gun and deliberately shot Arnold, who was unarmed. He turned, and covered the banker, Ralph E. Dobbs, and would probably have killed him had not his attention been diverted. He was overpowered and handcuffed. Arnold died the same evening.

"An inquest on Arnold's body was held on Monday, the jury returning a verdict, 'killed by gun-shot wound, inflicted by Joe Simpson.' Sometime on Wednesday night an armed body of citizens overpowered the sheriff and seized the prisoner and hanged him to a telephone pole. On Thursday, inquest was held on Simpson's body, the jury finding that 'he died by strangulation by persons unknown.' The body was disposed of.

#### "THE TRAGEDY

"The comparative quiet of Sunday morning was broken by a wild disturbance that resulted in the brutal murder of James Arnold, one of the most prominent citizens of the camp—the father of the camp in fact, inasmuch as he located the townsite, and ended in the lynching of his assailant, Joe Simpson, a local saloon-keeper and gun-fighter.

"It will go on record as one of the most remarkable lynchings that has taken place in the United States for many years. Joe Simpson, locally known as 'Hootch'—owing to his fondness for the liquor known by that name, had been indulging in his favorite stimulant for some days and was in a highly inflamed state. Joe was out of funds, a condition not calculated to improve his usual bad temper, and to his disordered imagination the only practical way of getting it was to kill a banker. For this purpose he crossed the road from the Gold Seal saloon, which he owned in partnership with Fred Oakes, and entered the Skidoo Trading Co.'s store, in which the Southern Calif. Bank is located. He immediately covered

the cashier, Ralph E. Dobbs, with his gun and demanded twenty dollars under penalty of instant death. In a moment the place was in a blaze of excitement. A wild rush ensued and before he could carry out his threat, he was overpowered by a crew of citizens and disarmed by Dr. R. E. Macdonald and Fred Oakes, his partner. He became so abusive to everyone that Jim Arnold, the manager, eventually put him out of the store by force.

"In the meantime Henry Sellers, the deputy sheriff, was on the scene with handcuffs with the intention of securing him to a telephone pole, there being no jail in camp. However, his partner and friends promised to keep guard over him until the necessary warrant could be sworn out for his arrest. He voluntarily went to bed and was soon asleep. His gun was hidden by Oakes. . . .

"Holding up a bank is no light offense, despite the proverbial wooliness of mining camps, and farther, he was still under a bond of good behavior from the court at Independence, having shot up a hotel there on his last visit. Dwelling on these things . . . he armed himself with his gun which he had discovered in the oven and crossed the street.

"He passed the bank counter and approaching Jim Arnold, asked, 'Have you got anything against me, Jim?' and Arnold answered, 'No, Joe, I've got nothing against you.' 'Yes you have—your end has come—prepare to die,' and with that he raised his gun and shot Arnold below the heart. . . .

"In a moment the camp was in an uproar. As rabbits from a warren, armed men sprang from every direction in every state of clothing, and carrying arms of every size and vintage from the half-toy derringer to the mammoth shot-gun that tears a man in two; from the hoary flintlock to cruel Colt Automatic 41 that cuts the bone like cheese. As they dashed up, they stopped transfixed by the scene before them.

"Gordon McBain—stupid with liquor, and unarmed in any way, attempted to arrest Joe as he stepped from the store, calling on the others not to shoot. Less than fifty yards away, Doc Macdonald, kneeling in the dirt,

with leveled rifle, again and again called on McBain to stand aside, or take the consequence of the bullet meant for Simpson. From the other corner came the constable, with his six-shooter raised, running like a deer and calling on Simpson who was moving slowly, crouching behind McBain, to submit.

"With a sudden rush they were in the restaurant, where Sellers felled Simpson with a blow on the head, McBain still blundered between the constable and his prisoner. Simpson made a last effort to wrench his hand free, which still clasped his gun, and the constable, realizing that all would be killed in a minute, slipped his gun barrel into McBain's ear and threatened to blow his brains out. Nor was he a second too soon, for Simpson discharged his last three shots at that moment, one bullet passing within an inch of Sellers' stomach. Before the zing of the last bullet had silenced, the constable had Simpson overpowered and his gun taken from him by Ben Epstein.

"Simpson, handcuffed, but jubilant at his cowardly crime and at the hot fight he had put up, was taken to the Club saloon until a guardhouse could be decided upon. . . .

"The lynching took place on Wednesday night. . . . The body was discovered next day, hanging, and Judge Thisse advised of the fact. An inquest was held later in the day. While there was a general feeling of levity outside of the court, the investigation was conducted with due dignity. Outside the court, several references were made that provoked a smile. One bystander remarked that he had been awakened twenty-three times during the night to be told that some persons had hanged Joe Simpson, and in his own words, 'I was surprised every time.' Another suggested that the jury return a verdict that the deceased 'died by the visitation of men.' A third remarked that Joe was a 'true Bohemian' until the last, having at his 'positively last appearance, hung around all night,' as was his custom.

"It is somewhat surprising that such an occurrence as a public hanging could be conducted so quietly. The

only sound heard during the night was that of McBain fleeing from imaginary pursuers. Some time before midnight some person was heard to open the pool room in which McBain was confined to whisper hoarsely: 'They're hanging Joe to a telephone pole. Run, Gordon, run like Hell.'

"McBain needed no second bidding. He made a bee-line for the mill gulch, the pounding of his iron-shod boots making ghostly thunder in the narrow canyon. It is generally supposed that he is still running. If so, he should be somewhere about Mexico by this time—which is certainly rough on Mexico. He was seen on the following morning passing Stovepipe Springs in Death Valley, at a dog trot, a little lame in the near hind fetlock. . . .

"Local gunmen are already in a chastened frame of mind. Would-be bad men as they bowl along the road on their triumphal entry of Skidoo will note the number, the stoutness, the great convenience of the telephone poles, and reflect thereon. It is a matter of deep regret, but it was the will of the people."

Thus with his tongue in his cheek the editor of the *Skidoo News* polished off his greatest story with a bow to the conventions. He made no mention of the fact that reporters and news photographers from Rhyolite and more metropolitan centers induced some of the Skidoo townsmen to take the body of Joe Simpson out of the temporary morgue and hoist it up again to the telephone pole so that photographs could be taken. He was a discreet editor—for a mining camp editor.

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## CHAPTER XVII



### REALITY DISPLACES ROMANCE

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PRACTICAL business, moving on the rails of the T. & T. Railroad in 1907, began to open Death Valley to a few travelers other than prospectors and miners. Several stations along the line gave access to the ground afire over rough and crooked roads through the Black and Funeral Mountains.

The railroad brought many men and some comforts into the region. Among other things, it brought the mails. No longer was it necessary to pay an Indian five dollars to carry a single letter between Furnace Creek and Ballarat. The little station of Zabriskie boasted the first post office within easy reach of Death Valley. It could well have boasted of its postmaster, Hughie Fraser.

When a post office inspector noted that Hughie was never using any money-order blanks, he attempted to explain that feature of the postal service to the Scotsman.

"I've got an easier way," Hughie explained. "I take the cash and give 'em my check on my own bank account. Hughie Fraser's checks are always good. I don't see why the post office department needs to complain."

There were some rare and substantial men in the building of the T. & T. and the attendant opening of the Death Valley region in the first decade of this century. While Scotty was advertising it as a mystery, these men were opening it to reality. After Borax Smith himself, perhaps John Ryan was

the most important of those men. C. M. Razor was close to John Ryan.

Razor was intimately acquainted with the ground afire through difficult surveying jobs long before he staked the right-of-way for the railroad. During his forty years of continuous service he has witnessed the passing of his original employer, Borax Smith, of John Ryan, of Chris Zabriskie, and the rise of Frank M. Jenifer from the position of the railroad's first Goldfield Traffic Manager to the post of president and general manager of the Pacific Coast Borax Company.

Mr. Razor has turned the eye of an expert and experienced civil and mining engineer upon practically every mining prospect opened in the Death Valley region in this century. He testifies that Death Valley's gold production has amounted to very little.

The most profitable gold properties were in the Tecopa district a few miles outside the southern tip of the valley. The Tecopa mines were opened about 1880 and have been operated intermittently through the years. Tecopa has produced perhaps four or five million dollars' worth of gold in all that time. But it was just plain, hard, commercial mining, with no more attendant excitement than borax mining.

The Confidence Mine, also outside the extreme southern tip of Death Valley is even older, but less productive. It has been closed a great many more years than it has been active since it was first located by scouts from a Mormon wagon train moving from Salt Lake City to Southern California.

Razor was in Death Valley in 1904 when the first two wagon-loads of supplies, with eight-mule teams, arrived at Furnace Creek Ranch on their way from a Santa Fe railhead at Ivanpah, 130 miles over an almost roadless desert, on their way to the newly-located Keane-Wonder Mine, another two-day journey to the north. The teams came down the rough bottom of Furnace Creek wash which had not been greatly



improved since the 'Forty-Niners used that route for their oxen and covered wagons fifty-five years earlier. They bought hay and took on water at the ranch, and continued up the valley to the foot of the steep slope below the Keane-Wonder. The final two-mile climb was a pack job. The Keane-Wonder operated for only a few years. It did not bring many men into Death Valley, though it did develop a wagon road from Rhyolite over Daylight Pass. It produced less than \$1,000,000 and very little excitement.

The three Ashford brothers, prospecting out of Johannesburg on the Mojave Desert at about the same time, located gold-bearing ore high in the western slope of the Black Mountains, overlooking the southern end of Death Valley. They had examined what was to become the Greenwater district, a few miles to the north, and had found nothing there to excite them. But the jumble of upthrust ledges and outcroppings which is now recognized as a geologist's dream, not to say nightmare, between Mormon Point and the Jubilee Pass and Salsberry Pass road from Death Valley to Shoshone was to produce just enough gold to keep the Ashfords in groceries and lawsuits for more than a third of a century.

The Ashford Mine, and Pete Auguerreberry's on the opposite side of Death Valley, are the only properties owned and operated by their discoverers through all the years. From time to time the sale of the Ashford property has been reported, but the property reverted to its original owners after failure of the buyers to make good on their contracts. Attendant litigation checked development through long periods of time.

The Ashfords extended three thousand feet of underground workings, and a road up from the valley so steep that it is necessary to load rocks into the back of their truck to insure traction for the climb. They maintained a well-equipped machine shop, and a well-filled larder. The ruined

Ashford Mill, a landmark in the Death Valley sink far below them, is a persistent reminder of what not to do.

That abandoned mill seems likely to remain as long as the neighboring mountains. Alex McLaren, who built it for B. M. McCausland in 1915, tells me that he put an extra truckload of cement into the construction when it was shipped in by mistake and could be used as cheaply as it could be shipped out again.

That was not the only mistake in the construction of the mill, though it promises to be the most permanent bit of evidence. The Ashfords had arranged to sell their mine; for cash, at a price near \$100,000. Frank Brock made the deal for the McCauslands. The Ashfords were better miners than they were business men. Happily they watched the mill go up. Their years of labor were to be rewarded as soon as production started. They watched the truck-loads of ore roll down the precipitous winding road from mine to mill. Happily they watched it crushed, reduced and refined. There is no thrill possible to mankind more exciting than the actual sight and handling of solid bricks of gold taken out of ground which a man has worked with his own hands. But that thrill was all that the Ashfords enjoyed from that deal. The purchase price of the mine was never paid. When they sued they entered upon years of litigation. The mill was closed. Vandals stripped it of machinery. The mine was closed. Vandals stripped it also.

The Ashfords had to begin all over again. One brother died. But prospectors and mining men are the most stubbornly optimistic human beings on earth.

"It's all ours now," Harold Ashford told me, as he stood upon a height above his main shaft and pointed out this ledge and that, this outcropping and that, and traced the underground faults, veins, dips and angles with geological phrases to show the layman how this will be developed into the great-

est gold-producer in the history of Death Valley. Maybe it will. Quite recently it has been sold again to men who plan its further development.

When the spur from the T. & T. reached the Lila C. borax mine in the autumn of 1907, practical business on a large scale for the first time effectively opened Death Valley. The junction of the spur with the main line from Ludlow to the Bullfrog district was named Death Valley Junction. The company settlement at the Lila C. was named Ryan. A post office was established under that name. For a time before the railroad was completed, the twenty-mule teams came back into their own, hauling borax to the end of the railroad building up through the Amargosa Canyon. But that was a brief blooming. When the spur had been completed, that once-spectacular feature of Death Valley life lapsed forever.

Almost simultaneously with the arrival of the railroad came the national financial panic of 1907. Gold mines became something to talk about but nothing to inspire investment on the part of all the Americans who were distrustfully using Clearing House Certificates in lieu of money. Only borax kept that section of the desert alive. Borax Smith was King of Death Valley.

But like many kings through many centuries of history, like William T. Coleman before him in the borax business, Borax Smith over-extended himself. With an imposing mansion in Oakland, California, he had conceived an idea that only an improved transportation service was needed to cover all the hills behind Oakland, Piedmont and Berkeley with homes. He believed that settlement should follow transportation rather than the reverse. He organized the Oakland Realty Syndicate and the Key Route System of trains and ferries, to materialize his theory in the profitable upbuilding of the east-bay area.

Like some other pioneers and builders in the opening of

the West, such as Senator W. A. Clark in mining or Mark Hopkins in railroading, he filled his home with what he fondly believed to be treasures of art. He went in for yachting as an incidental activity suitable to his fame and fortune. His sloop, *Effort*, won the King Edward VII Cup off Newport in 1906.

At sixty, Borax Smith was still a man of great wealth, enviable reputation, tremendous energy, imposing moustaches, and a wider diversity of interests than he had ever indulged before. All those qualities and possessions had been accumulated through the borax business. As long as he concentrated upon that he was one of the great builders of the West. But the wider diversity of interests, further complicated by the panic of 1907, proved his undoing.

The Key Route System was a boon to the east-bay area. No longer were commuters from Berkeley, Piedmont and Oakland forced to breathe coal smoke on trains or mingle with truck horses on the lower decks of ferryboats. But neither could all the persons who happily welcomed that improvement in transportation pay for new homes in the affected area when the panic of 1907 blighted their incomes. The Key Route and Oakland Realty Syndicate labored under a heavy indebtedness. In 1912 the banks foreclosed. Borax Smith's great block of stock in Borax Consolidated, Ltd., which directed the affairs of the Pacific Coast Borax Company, was turned over to a syndicate of underwriters and sold. In 1913, at the age of sixty-seven, instead of being one of the richest men on the Pacific Slope, Borax Smith owed \$7,500,000. He went promptly to work to restore his fortune and pay his debts through the business which had made him great, and which he had made great among the expanding businesses of America.

Two cowboys who had heard of the discovery and sale of a borax deposit north of Las Vegas, Nevada, set out to do a

little prospecting, just as Harry Spiller had set out from Columbus Marsh, Nevada, forty years earlier and dropped the word of borax possibilities into Aaron Winter's eager ear. It was dry country north and east of Las Vegas all the way to the Colorado River. The amateur prospectors soon found that they were more interested in water than in ore. They were familiar with desert conditions, but unfamiliar with this particular bit of desert. They turned back. With luck they might save the lives of their horses and themselves.

They had luck. As is often the case, it was based upon their own resources. They recognized a *tinaja*, one of the natural cisterns scooped out of solid rock at the foot of precipitous desert walls which sometimes collect rain water running down the nearby slopes. This *tinaja* was filled with rubble, but the young men recognized it. They threw out the rubble with their hands, and came to water. Thankfully they drank, and made way for their horses to drink. Looking up at the slope above they noted a wide dirty-white streak across it. For the first time in several days their interest in borax returned. They climbed the slope and dug out samples. "She burned green."

They knew the name and fame of Borax Smith. They did not differentiate between the Pacific Coast Borax Company, the American Potash and Chemical Company, the West End Chemical Company, the U. S. Borax Company, or Scott Russell's little Death Valley Borax Company. To them Borax Smith was still the man who bought borax claims, and mined them. And they were right.

Borax Smith was seventy-five by that time, but he still had faith in borax. The instant the word of the new discovery reached him in Oakland he hurried to an eastbound train, met the prospectors and their grubstakes on the desert, and took horse to the claims. His West End Chemical Company put up \$250,000 to buy and develop the property.

But a man's time is limited at the age of seventy-five. There were not enough years left for Borax Smith to come all the way back. At eighty the stockholders in the West End Chemical Company forced his resignation. There is still some bitterness surviving about that action, but nothing essential to this narrative. Borax Smith lived another five years, and died a comparatively poor man. But he had lived as only the great pioneers in the building of America lived.

Death Valley itself may be looked upon as his monument. Borax Smith had his faults. So has Death Valley.

With the coming of the railroad to the Lila C. Mine in 1907, the greatest single step in the opening of Death Valley to the world had been taken. Trains ran daily to its eastern gateway. The camp of Ryan at the Lila C. Mine housed more than a hundred men, steadily employed. The way down Furnace Creek wash was smoothed out sufficiently to make travel by wagon or buckboard practical. Greenland Ranch was improved under Oscar Denton, and its name changed to Furnace Creek Ranch.

Title to the borax claims was vested in the United States Borax Company, and the deposits were worked by the Pacific Coast Borax Company. Pacific Coast had established the practice of working whatever deposits were nearest to economical transportation until they were exhausted, or until better deposits were found convenient to transportation. In the meantime United States Borax continued prospecting, assessment work and the establishment of title to other promising deposits for future work.

The Monte Blanco, the Corckscrew Canyon group, the Played Out, the Clara Lode, and the Biddy McCarthy, all on the Death Valley side of the Black Mountains, close to Furnace Creek wash, had been in possession of the United States company for years before the railroad was built to open the Lila C.

By the time the Lila C. was approaching exhaustion in 1914 it was evident that an additional railroad extension into the eastern slopes of Death Valley was the only practical method of taking out that borax. Whereas thirty years earlier a twenty-mule team haul of 165 miles to the nearest railroad point had been profitable, now the lowered price of borax could not even justify a twenty-mule haul only twenty miles to Death Valley Junction. The Death Valley Narrow Gauge Railroad was projected from the Junction to open first the Played Out and later the Biddy McCarthy Mine. It was twenty miles to the Played Out, twenty-two to the Biddy McCarthy, mostly miles of difficult railroad engineering into the very cliffs of the ground afire.

The Pacific Coast Borax Company had no illusions. It figured the extent of the deposits, costs, risks, and prices. It built the railroad. Into a country which had echoed no sound for a million years louder than the mournful bark of a hungry coyote or the whistling challenge of a rutting mountain ram came the scream of a locomotive. Winding on a man-made narrow ledge above the wash through which emigrants had goaded their oxen with a "Gee, Buck!" and a "Haw, Bright!" sixty-four years earlier, trains clattered over steel rails and carried passengers into the panorama of Death Valley.

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## CHAPTER XVIII



### CULTURE COMES TO THE DESERT

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**D**URING the mining of the Lila C. the settlement and post office there, known as Ryan, was the center of human activity in the entire Death Valley region. The company built a mill at the junction for the treatment of the ores.

Long lanky Bob Tubbs saw opportunity in that. He filed a homestead claim on the ground between the main line and the spur, and opened a saloon with incidental attractions. Many men were employed in the building of the \$150,000 mill, and the subsequent addition of units to a total cost of \$400,000. Many were employed in the construction of the Death Valley Narrow Gauge Railroad. Bob Tubbs prospered. Death Valley Junction became a more important center than Ryan had been. The post office and name of Ryan was moved from the Lila C. to the Biddy McCarthy.

Business was building a new conception of Death Valley in the consciousness of America. It was still an outpost of civilization, but civilization was exerting itself to correct that situation. In 1915 civilization worked through Bob Tubbs, who owned and operated all the business of Death Valley Junction outside the borax company's activities.

Bob Tubbs provided the liquor, the incidental groceries, the gambling facilities, and other delights for prospectors, wayfarers on various missions, migratory laborers and anyone outside the company who might be temporarily based upon



Death Valley Junction. Looking upon Bob Tubbs now at his ranch in Ash Meadows, ten miles from the scene of his triumphs, one would not suspect that he had ever been selected by Providence to bring the refinements of life into the purlieus of Death Valley. Looking at him behind the bar of his saloon and allied enterprises in 1915, one would not have suspected it.

Miss Bess V. Davis, graduated from the Los Angeles Normal School that year, was one of the 100,000,000-odd residents of the United States who did not suspect it. But one can hardly blame Miss Davis. She was only eighteen years old. She had never been away from home overnight. She had never seen a man who looked anything like Bob Tubbs, or a woman who looked like some of his employees. And she wanted, needed, a job very much.

Bob Tubbs made the opening move. He composed a letter to the Inyo County Superintendent of Schools, explaining that Death Valley Junction needed a schoolteacher. In view of the fact that there were only five children of school age including his own two, and not counting Indians, within a day's ride of the Junction, he must have proved himself an inspired letter writer. The Superintendent took his word for it. She didn't know Bob Tubbs either. She wrote to the Los Angeles Normal School to send a teacher to Death Valley Junction. It was late October. All the teachers in all the established schools of California had long since been engaged. Little Bess Davis had given up hope for that term, and she needed a job so badly. When she received notice from the Normal that the job was waiting at Death Valley Junction, it seemed too good to be true. She sang with delight. Then she cried all night because for the first time in her life she was going to be parted from the sister who was her closest companion. Then she packed her trunk, boarded a Santa Fe train to Ludlow, and transferred to the Tonopah & Tidewater line.

She was the only woman in the car, and a very small eighteen-year-old woman at that. She felt herself growing smaller and smaller as the accommodation train labored northward through Amargosa Canyon. Every time she felt that one of the half dozen men in the car was glancing at her, she shrank a little more. She turned her eyes resolutely out the window upon a varying desert landscape, and concentrated upon being homesick. Conductor Rainwater came through occasionally, and tried to make conversation, but she answered him in monosyllables. It worried him. He spoke to a young civil engineer of his acquaintance among the male passengers.

After a time Miss Davis wearied of the desert landscape and studied her watch and timetable. The young man to whom the conductor had spoken recognized his opportunity. He sidled over to Miss Davis's seat when she laid down the timetable and asked, with an apology, if he might look at it. She nodded assent. The young man thanked her, carried the folder to his own seat, studied it for a time, and brought it back, with thanks.

"I see you've marked Death Valley Junction," he said. "Are you going there?"

She looked up at him doubtfully, and realized that he was quite a respectable appearing man. "Yes," she said.

"It's rather a lonely place for women—nice women," he said. "But of course you know all about it or you wouldn't be going there. You know Mrs. Fred Corkill and Mrs. Ray Ferguson?"

She shook her head.

"Thanks for letting me see the timetable," he said. "We'll be there in an hour. I hope you will not be disappointed. There are some fine people there, but it is a rough place, a real frontier settlement. There are not many frontiers left in America any more."

"No," she said. Why didn't the man go away and let her cry?

"Well," he said, "good luck. And thanks again." And this time he left the car.

A few minutes later Conductor Rainwater reappeared, and sat down on the outer arm of her seat.

"Your ticket reads to Death Valley Junction," said the conductor without the finesse of the younger man, "and I notice it's a one-way ticket. It isn't much of a town. Where are you going to stay there?"

"I'm going to Mr. Robert Tubbs' place," she said.

"Bob Tubbs?" Mr. Rainwater was genuinely shocked. "You can't stay at Bob Tubbs. Do you know what sort of place Bob Tubbs keeps?"

"I know he's the man I'm to report to."

"Why, you can't stay at Bob Tubbs. You simply can't. You're hardly more than a child. You just give up that idea. Now I'll tell you what to do. I have a sister, Mrs. Ferguson, who lives at the junction. Her husband's engineer on the Death Valley Narrow Gauge Railroad. I'll take you over to her house when we get there and she'll put you up someway until you finish your business, whatever it is, and you can take the next train back." He stood up, smiling. "Now that's settled," he said.

But it was not settled. Conductor Rainwater had recognized Bess Davis's youth, innocence and inexperience, but he had not recognized the independence and determination of which she was capable.

Suitcase in hand, she left the passenger coach when the train stopped, and looked around. The borax mill dominated the immediate scene. The rambling boardinghouse and bunkhouses for the men stood two hundred yards away. A few small houses seemed to shiver in the autumn wind. In the Y

of the junction a large frame building with a wooden awning stood out in front of a few cabins. A roustabout inspected her furtively, but answered her politely enough when she asked for Bob Tubbs' place. He pointed out the frame building in the Y, and followed her with his eyes until she reached it.

A few roughly dressed men lounging on the plank porch studied her as she approached. With head as high as her five feet two inches would permit, she entered the place. It appeared to be a bar. Young girl graduates of the Los Angeles Normal School in 1915 were not in the habit of frequenting barrooms. This was the first one Bess Davis had ever seen. Behind the bar was a man, studying her with the same odd and slightly disconcerting expression which she had noted in the eyes of every man she had encountered since leaving Ludlow at daylight. Her sense of humor came to her rescue just long enough to produce a smile at the thought of what her father, mother, and sister would think of her appearance in a public barroom. Then she stepped up to the bar.

"I'm looking for Mr. Tubbs," she said.

"Eh? Oh. I'm Tubbs."

"I am Miss Davis, the new schoolteacher." She gathered all the dignity she could. "I have a letter from the Los Angeles Normal telling me to report to you."

"Oh. Yeh. Glad to see you, Miss Davis. Glad to see you. I'll take you out to the cook. She'll fix you up with a room." He wiped his hands upon a bar rag, and led the way through a rear door. "We sure need a schoolteacher here. My kids are gettin' wilder'n hell."

A slatternly woman was bending over pots and pans on a coal range.

"This is the new schoolteacher," said Bob Tubbs. "Miss Davis. Fix her up with a room." Hastily, as if embarrassed, he withdrew. The woman straightened up, turned, wiped her

hands on a soiled apron, and inspected the girl. The hostility of her glance brought a shiver with it. Hostility gave way to astonishment and more slowly to distress.

"Teacher," she said. "Why, you're only a child yourself. You can't stay here. This is no fittin' place for a young girl to stay."

"But I'm the new teacher. I need the job. I have to stay. The Normal sent me here. Why does everybody tell me I can't stay here?"

The woman shrugged. The momentary distress in her eyes vanished. She had a stubborn streak of her own, as definite as that of the girl. "You just can't; that's all. It ain't decent. Come; I'll show you." She led the girl back through a passageway along which were half a dozen doors. "There's a man that uses number five that's gone for a day or two, but it ain't fittin' for you." She opened a door. "Look."

Bess Davis glanced into a tiny room with gray blankets tumbled on a cot, a bowl and pitcher on a decrepit washstand, and miscellaneous articles of apparel on a chair and upon the dusty floor. Despite herself, her determination faltered.

"Besides," said the woman in a little more kindly tone, "this is a tough layout around here. And there ain't even no locks on these doors. You go get yourself someplace else to stay. I wouldn't have you on my conscience. I'd even forgot I had one till I seen you."

"Thanks," said Bess Davis. "I guess you're right," and she made her way back to the depot. Apologetically she hunted up Conductor Rainwater, busy with the dispatcher in the station. "I guess you're right, Mr. Conductor," she said. "I'm sorry, but I must impose on your kindness and ask you to introduce me to your sister."

"No trouble at all. She'll be glad to take care of you over night, and you can go back with me tomorrow."

"But I can't go back tomorrow. I have to live here. I'm going to teach school here."

"Oh!" A great burden seemed to slip from Mr. Rainwater. "Why in the world didn't you tell me that in the first place? You certainly had me worried. I knew you didn't belong at Bob Tubbs' place. Why, that's a—, you just don't belong there, that's all. But you were so d—, so secretive, and you're such a little thing, I couldn't figure you out."

"My father told me not to talk to any strange men," said the girl. "This is the first time I've been away from home."

Rainwater burst into a roar of laughter. "Conductors are different," he said at last. "Well, you're learning. Come on, and I'll introduce you to my sister."

That was swiftly accomplished. But Mrs. Ferguson had no extra room in her tiny cottage. "I'd be glad to take care of you someway for a night or two, child," she said, "but I simply can't do it for the whole of the school term."

Bess Davis was finding it very difficult to bring culture into Death Valley.

"The only place I can think of," said Mrs. Ferguson, "is the Corkills. They have a spare room for officials of the company who have to stop over a few nights here sometimes. No one in it now. Fred Corkill is superintendent of the mill. Come on; we'll go see Mrs. Fred." She guided the girl to the Corkill home, and explained the situation. Mrs. Corkill was charming.

"Why, you poor child," she said, when introductions and explanations had been made. "Of course you can stay here. We have an extra room for precisely such emergencies."

Evidently the Corkills' hospitality and the arrival of the new schoolteacher, and all the attendant circumstances were already well known throughout Death Valley Junction, although the girl had only been there half an hour. Two young men from the company offices appeared with Miss Davis's

trunk, and waited smilingly for introductions. As soon as these had been completed, one of the young men asked, "Do you dance?"

"A little," said Miss Davis, shyly.

"That's grand. We're having a swell Halloween Dance tonight. You'll be the only unmarried woman there, Miss Davis. Isn't it swell that you got here in time?"

"Yes," said Miss Davis, doubtfully.

"You boys get back to work," said Mrs. Corkill. "Miss Davis is tired. Thanks for bringing the trunk."

"Yes; thank you very much," said Miss Davis, and as the young men departed regretfully she turned to Mrs. Corkill. "I don't want to cry," she said, "but I'm afraid I'm going to."

"Nonsense. We haven't time for that. You come out to the kitchen and help me make sandwiches. This is going to be a fine party tonight. You see, we have to make our own recreation in Death Valley. You will be the belle of the ball, my dear. I am as happy as the boys to think you are here in the nick of time." So with light talk, warm heart and busy hands, Mrs. Corkill kept the homesick girl from tears through the afternoon.

"We're going to the company boardinghouse for dinner," she said, when they had finished their work. "You may as well meet the men and boys there now. It will be your regular boarding place, you know. The food is excellent. Fred sees to that. He says we can't keep good men on this desert without good food. And I think you'll find that these men are all first rate. Then, after dinner, you'll have time for a little rest before you dress and go to the dance."

"I would like some dinner," said the girl. "I haven't eaten anything since I left home last night. It seems like a year. But if you don't mind, Mrs. Corkill, I must beg off on the dance. My head is splitting, and I'm so tired I can hardly stand. Tomorrow I must start the school."

Mrs. Corkill laid a kindly hand on her shoulder. "You are tired," she said. "But a good dinner will help that. And as for the dance, my dear, if I failed to take you to that dance, those boys would be over here in the dead of night and murder us both in our beds. Come along now."

So Bess Davis was introduced to the delights of Death Valley society. Exhausted, but happy, homesick, but too weary to ponder upon it, she tumbled into bed in the small hours, and awakened to a glittering new day upon the desert. Stoically she endured the ordeal of breakfast in that boardinghouse full of men. At least a dozen of them took the opportunity of telling her precisely where the schoolhouse stood. When she arrived at the building it was such a schoolhouse as she had never imagined, a sheetiron building, only nine by twelve feet in area, with a low table in the center and low benches on either side. Five youngsters, including little Bob and George Tubbs, and one Antonio waited bashfully at the door. Miss Davis summoned up her Normal Training School experience, introduced herself, unnecessarily, and invited them in.

As a start it seemed advisable to find out the grades in which the children should be placed for instruction. She tried them out on the spelling of a few simple words. Bob Tubbs could spell his first name, but that was about all. Antonio could spell cat and dog and boy. He appeared to be in line for higher rating than the others. Miss Davis raised the hurdle a notch.

"That's fine, Antonio," she said. "Perhaps you should be in the second grade. Spell 'dozen,' Antonio, please."

Antonio wriggled painfully on his bench. "D," he ventured.

"Yes."

Antonio wriggled some more, and gazed out the single window at ten miles of desert extending to the perpendicular



upthrust of Eagle Mountain. He wished with all his heart that he were upon the top of that peak, so that he would not have to disappoint this teacher. He turned his gaze back to her with eyes pleading for help.

"Yes, Antonio," she said. "Dozen. Go on."

Antonio summoned his strength, and managed another feeble, "d." Then he collapsed. "Aw, Jesus Christ, Miss Davis, that's too hard a word for me to spell."

Miss Davis staggered, but recovered. This was Death Valley Junction. She was growing acclimated. She devoted the rest of the morning to less technical aspects of education. By the time she dismissed the five children for the noon recess she had won their hearts completely. When she returned to the tiny schoolhouse after lunch, the five abandoned their play before the door and rushed her like a band of small raiding Indians. She drew back, startled, unable to distinguish their words and cries.

"Now wait a minute, children; what is it you are saying? One at a time. Antonio, you tell me."

"Aw, Jesus Christ, Miss Davis, it ain't fair. I thought of it first, and now they all want you to do it."

"Antonio, what did I tell you this morning about swearing?"

"Aw." He hung his head. "I'm sorry, teacher; I won't do it no more."

"It isn't nice. I hope you will remember. Now what is it you all want?"

"We want you to save us your whisky flasks," the five cried in chorus.

Bess Davis was learning, even more rapidly than her small charges. The information tumbled forth that the collection of whisky flasks from bunkhouses and other sources, and their sale to Bob Tubbs was the chief source of income for the younger generation of Death Valley Junction. The new

teacher appeared to them to be a new source of supply. Antonio had thought of it first, and claimed prior rights. Miss Davis corrected that error as she corrected their English and improved their spelling. Both the cultural and social life of the Death Valley region improved under her influence.

When she returned in the following autumn she was an established personage in the community. The school had doubled in numbers. Bob Tubbs had a new cook who added five children to the rolls. It was a most successful season. The summer heat had not even threatened when the eight months' term neared its end. The weather was still delightfully cool for dancing. The young men in the company employ, and the parents of children who were profiting by Miss Davis's instruction decided that school really should continue as long as weather permitted. But Inyo County had fixed the term at eight months, and the compensation at eighty dollars a month. That was as far as the county funds would reach. But Death Valley Junction had more practical ideas. Its residents who liked to dance joined with its residents who had noted improvement in the manners and scholastic attainments of their children and subscribed eighty dollars to extend the school term another month.

Miss Davis was delighted to oblige. By that time she loved Death Valley almost as much as Death Valley loved her. It was with genuine regret that, having been elected to the Los Angeles city schools, she sent her resignation to Death Valley Junction. But that growing community could not recede. Young Fred Corkill, the third of his line in the borax business, three years old, had attached himself to Miss Davis with all the devotion for which men of three are noted. He was heart-broken when she failed to return. Nothing but education could fill the void. Mrs. Ray Ferguson took over the school. Year by year it expanded. Young Fred mounted steadily up-

ward through all the eight grades, and was graduated with honors.

The little Tubbses grew to be big Tubbses, and to be a credit to Death Valley's first school teacher. Bob Tubbs sold his property to the borax company when the mounting culture of the community indicated that it might be advisable, and established himself at Ash Meadows. He is still available to the curious there, but not notably cordial.

In the meantime, the post office of Ryan having been moved to the Biddy McCarthy Mine overlooking Death Valley proper from a height of some two thousand feet, there were two busy communities in the eastern reaches of the ground afire. The Played Out Mine was played out in fact, and the Biddy McCarthy was the center of the world's borax production. Before the Death Valley Narrow Gauge Railroad had been extended to that point, the company's engineers had calculated that there was sufficient colemanite there to supply the market for many years. When that too was exhausted there would be more available in the tumbled jumble of knobs and hills and low ridges and crooked canyons known as the Monte Blanco and Corkscrew claims a little distance to the northwest.

A paramount responsibility of the engineers and officemen for many years had been to establish and maintain title to the deposits in line of progress, so that as fast as each deposit was exhausted another near by would be available. Long before the Lila C. or the Biddy McCarthy had been opened, the company had located or purchased the location rights throughout the Monte Blanco and Corkscrew areas.

A great many of the claims had been taken up as placer claims under mining regulations which differentiated between placer and lode locations. State mining law required that a hundred dollar's worth of work must be done each year on placer claims to maintain title. Each year the company

sent out men with supplies and equipment to do that so-called assessment work. Later, convinced of the extent and value of the colemanite deposits, it made lode locations and patented the property, thus obtaining permanent title which would permit it to hold the property without further expense except taxes. The patenting of lode claims for permanent title could be accomplished only by following the routine and paying the fees required by government. Accurate surveys and expensive and painstaking procedure were necessary.

There was a great deal of borax property scattered through that region. C. M. Rasor had surveyed most of it. As early as 1904 he had labored over those glaring slopes with transit on shoulder and sweat in his eyes until Death Valley temperature reached a July 1 average of 130 degrees in the shade or 145 in the sun. Then he had conducted his crew of four men from Furnace Creek Ranch up Furnace Creek wash behind a light wagon drawn by four horses and carrying a thousand pounds of supplies and equipment. The road was so rough in those days that the men had to walk to lighten the load. It took two days to reach Allen's Well, which reached down through the sand to the seeping Amargosa River, and several days more to the Santa Fe spur railhead at Ivanpah. Mr. Rasor was thoroughly familiar with those claims. An illuminating sidelight is that he still prefers the Death Valley of those hardships to the luxuries available there today.

Among the claims surveyed in that season was one known as the Clara Lode. John Ryan, then field engineer of both the United States Borax Company and the Pacific Coast Borax Company, and in charge of their mining operations, ordered the patenting of the Clara Lode. Other claims surveyed at the same time were retained in the list of placers, with title maintained by annual assessment work. It was a complicated task to keep them all straight, especially when the company was operating exclusively at Borate, 150 miles

away in the Calico district. Not until borax mining was resumed in the Death Valley region, did the complications fully reveal themselves. With the extension of the narrow gauge railroad into Death Valley, various men with an eye to the main chance looked for an incidental profit.

One James P. Hughes set up location monuments upon a number of lode claims. He declared them to be in the public domain because of the fact that assessment work in sufficient annual amounts had not been done to maintain the borax company's rights while the areas involved were still in the placer classification.

That was annoying. Here the borax company had built \$3,000,000 worth of railroad to extract the mineral wealth of Death Valley, and an individual named Hughes was trying to stop the whole development while he grabbed himself a piece. The United States Borax Company proceeded to sue Mr. Hughes. The trial before Judge Oscar Trippett lasted sixty days. Judge Trippett found in favor of the company, and the mining of borax in that area went on.

But troubles were not yet at an end. Undeterred by the Hughes rebuff, W. S. Russell, Hattie Russell, C. A. Barlow, W. H. Hill and D. C. Monihon, organized as the Death Valley Borax Company, moved men, tents, supplies and equipment onto the Clara Lode, set up their monuments, and went to work. Now Mr. Rasor remembered quite well that he had surveyed the Clara Lode claim, that Mr. Ryan had ordered its patenting, and that he himself had supplied the necessary data and later had seen an order from the General Land Office in Washington, D. C., calling for the issue of a patent as soon as the final legal papers were presented by the company. That had been a good many years ago. Way back in 1906. And now, after all these years, Scott Russell and his associates were stepping in to block the whole development.

Attorneys of the company investigated the archives, and

found, among other things, that the United States Borax Company had been paying taxes regularly on that land for fourteen years. But Russell's outfit was in possession. To establish a basis for court action, Major Julian Boyd, then superintendent of operations at Ryan, was advised to send a crew to establish themselves on the disputed claim. If the Russell outfit disputed their right, and threw them off, there would be something to go to court about.

Major Boyd appointed Harry P. Gower, a rising young engineer in the Ryan operations, to that task. Gower selected a few husky miners, loaded a wagon with supplies, and set out down the grade from the Biddy McCarthy. Luck, in the form of the only heavy fog that Harry Gower has noted in twenty-odd years around Death Valley, rode with them. The fog was so thick when they reached the Clara that they could not see the Russell outfit. But they found the claim boundaries, and proceeded to set up their tent, as silently as possible. The job was completed when the fog lifted, and revealed the Russell establishment only fifty yards away. Russell's men came promptly and belligerently to call, with picks and shovels in hand. Gower explained that this was United States Borax Company land. It did not look that way to the Russell crew.

They advanced to the attack. Gower's men resisted. That was all right if it did not go too far. To establish a basis for the action which the United States Borax attorneys were planning it was necessary that these men and their equipment should be thrown off the disputed property by force. A few black eyes were acquired in evidence of that force before the Gower crew and all their impedimenta were hurled over the sideline of the claim. Then the Scott outfit added insult to injury. They defamed and derided the invaders from the Biddy McCarthy with aspersions upon their ancestry, and consequent lack of intestinal fortitude. The men wanted to

go back and disprove those allegations, but Harry Gower's mission had been accomplished, and he withdrew his forces.

On that basis the case was brought to trial. In the course of the trial it was disclosed that while all customary formalities for patent of the land had been complied with, even to the payment of the stipulated fee of \$105 to the Register and Receiver of the Land Office in 1905, the patent had never been issued because of the technicality that lands specified had been included in so-called school lands assigned to the State of California upon the basis of a survey made in 1858. The records evidently had been jumbled, and the United States Borax Company had been happily paying taxes for fifteen years upon land which it did not own, but thought it owned.

In the ensuing litigation Judge Wm. F. Dehy of Inyo County found in favor of Scott Russell's Death Valley Borax Company. The United States Borax Company appealed. A large and interesting part of the history of Death Valley is recorded in the maze of legal verbiage of the Transcript on Appeal from Judge Dehy's decision. It filled a huge and closely-printed volume. Judge Dehy's decision was upheld. The little Death Valley Borax Company had set the big United States Borax Company back on its heels. But that was about all it could do. It could not really mine, and ship and refine the Clara Lode deposit in competition with the larger, richer, more accessible deposits which had been opened by the extension of the railroad to the Biddy McCarthy. It sold the property, and the United States Borax Company purchased from the buyer, and marked the entire incident down to experience.

The Clara Lode has not yet been mined. Neither have the claims in the same neighborhood once jumped by J. P. Hughes on the allegation that proper annual assessment work had not been done. But the extent of the work to maintain



*Frashers Photos, Pomona, California. Courtesy Death Valley Hotel Company.*

Panoramic View of Death Valley. The mountains on either side are more than a mile almost straight up from the white smears of the bottom, below sea level. Note the wide alluvial fans from the mouths of the distant canyons to the valley floor. The white bottoms are salt, soda, borax, alkali and similar minerals.





*Courtesy Death Valley Hotel Company.*

What was originally the Biddy McCarthy borax mine, overlooking Death Valley from a distance of several miles, is now known as Death Valley Hotel. The mine is dry, clean, and electrically lighted, and is a popular objective of tourists, who visit it aboard a baby-gauge railway once

and finally establish title is still evident on every hand to any tourist who cares to add the short but crooked Corkscrew Canyon and Twenty-mule Canyon road to his exploratory tours of Death Valley. Assessment holes gap at every turn.

The second, and now more or less abandoned, Ryan, based upon the Biddy McCarthy, looks out across that tumbled territory only half a dozen miles to Death Valley. There was life in the Biddy McCarthy, and the old lady still seems to be not dead but sleeping, ready to rise up and dance a jig when, if ever, the company's greater, richer, more economically mined and refined borax products based upon Kramer in the Mojave Desert, are exhausted.

The Biddy McCarthy maintained an average payroll of 250 men from 1915 to 1928. It looked like a permanent camp. Great dormitories with wide verandas were stretched along the steep slope near the mouth of the original mine. A large dining hall and kitchen were built. Small homes for married workmen and for officials and engineers were erected on parallel ridges running up to the main settlement. Some of these buildings were brought 150 miles from what had, a few years earlier, looked like an even more permanent camp—Goldfield. The tiny Catholic church of Rhyolite which had been established by Bishop Scanlan of Salt Lake City and one of his priests, with money largely collected by Gambler Jim Clayton from games in which he had an interest, was brought to Ryan to serve as a public hall.

That practice of moving the buildings of dying towns, sometimes as far as two hundred miles across the desert, perhaps deserves a paragraph for itself. The removal of Greenwater's houses has already been mentioned. Shortly before that, Alex McLaren took a contract to wreck and ship the houses from abandoned Borate, in the Calicos, to the opening Lila C. Some of those structures appeared later at Death Valley Junction and at the new Ryan. Other houses from



*Courtesy Death Valley Hotel Company.*

What was originally the Biddy McCarthy borax mine, overlooking Death Valley from a distance of several miles, is now known as Death Valley Hotel. The mine is dry, clean, and electrically lighted, and is a popular objective of tourists, who visit it aboard a baby-gauge railway once used for transportation of ore and miners.

and finally establish title is still evident on every hand to any tourist who cares to add the short but crooked Corkscrew Canyon and Twenty-mule Canyon road to his exploratory tours of Death Valley. Assessment holes gap at every turn.

The second, and now more or less abandoned, Ryan, based upon the Biddy McCarthy, looks out across that tumbled territory only half a dozen miles to Death Valley. There was life in the Biddy McCarthy, and the old lady still seems to be not dead but sleeping, ready to rise up and dance a jig when, if ever, the company's greater, richer, more economically mined and refined borax products based upon Kramer in the Mojave Desert, are exhausted.

The Biddy McCarthy maintained an average payroll of 250 men from 1915 to 1928. It looked like a permanent camp. Great dormitories with wide verandas were stretched along the steep slope near the mouth of the original mine. A large dining hall and kitchen were built. Small homes for married workmen and for officials and engineers were erected on parallel ridges running up to the main settlement. Some of these buildings were brought 150 miles from what had, a few years earlier, looked like an even more permanent camp—Goldfield. The tiny Catholic church of Rhyolite which had been established by Bishop Scanlan of Salt Lake City and one of his priests, with money largely collected by Gambler Jim Clayton from games in which he had an interest, was brought to Ryan to serve as a public hall.

That practice of moving the buildings of dying towns, sometimes as far as two hundred miles across the desert, perhaps deserves a paragraph for itself. The removal of Greenwater's houses has already been mentioned. Shortly before that, Alex McLaren took a contract to wreck and ship the houses from abandoned Borate, in the Calicos, to the opening Lila C. Some of those structures appeared later at Death Valley Junction and at the new Ryan. Other houses from

crumbling Rhyolite were purchased by the borax company and set up in the growing settlement of Death Valley Junction. And even in such recent days as those of the completion of Hoover Dam, with the simultaneous vacating of numerous small buildings at Boulder City, the practice was renewed. Furnace Creek Ranch was thriving as a tourists' center by that time. The ranch management bought a number of the Boulder City houses and trucked them 160 miles to increase the accommodations of the camp. W. H. Brown, "Brownie" of Death Valley Junction, whose duties included the maintenance of the telephone lines from Vegas to the junction, recalls the latter incidents most vividly. The buildings were large enough so that projecting corners occasionally knocked a telephone pole out of line and broke the wires. They arrived, one by one, at Furnace Creek Camp, and Brownie, pole by pole, repaired the damage they had done en route.

Ryan had its public hall, and its regular and substantial payroll, but its facilities for entertainment were distinctly limited. There was never much excitement in Ryan. The company was opening a mine on sound engineering practice. All the residents were known to each other. There were no transients, and no crime. Few of its residents could even get a chance to see the show which Oscar Denton staged at Furnace Creek Ranch when word was sent there that the cook-house needed fresh beef. Oscar was a man who felt his responsibilities. When he received an order for beef, it demanded action. He promptly instructed two Indian helpers to harness a team, with doubletree and chain, and get into the pasture. While that was being done, he loaded his rifle, walked to the fence, picked out a likely looking steer at any distance, and knocked him over with a bullet. At the crack of the rifle the Indians, mounted on the team, would go tearing out into the field, hook their chain to the dead steer—he was always dead if Oscar had aimed the bullet—and come

tearing back, dragging the steer like a bull from the ring. With precision such as a Chicago packing house might envy, the animal would be pulled up to a scaffold, dressed out, and sent posthaste to the boardinghouse at Ryan.

The company liked to have its employees happy. It put a piano in the hall, and occasionally there were dances, though Ryan lacked the social stimulus of an attractive and unmarried woman which Bess Davis had brought to Death Valley Junction.

Its most attractive young woman arrived as a bride. She was Mrs. Harry Gower. Pauline Gower was a Pittsburgh girl. Anyone who is familiar with both Pittsburgh and the desert will not have to strain the imagination to suspect that there might have been a shock in such a transplanting. The interesting point is that there was no shock. "I was so very much in love," is Mrs. Gower's completely satisfactory explanation.

And incidentally, she was too busy to be homesick. She lived in a company house, one of several bare frame shells brought down from Goldfield, utterly without conveniences. She did not even know how to build a fire, although her new responsibilities included cooking on a wood-burning stove. She learned by practical trial and error. Soon she was amazed to realize that she enjoyed the desert, its peace and quiet, its broad clear vistas, its brilliant colors at sunrise and sunset, fading to the white light of day or darkening to the star-spangled blue of night. Soon thereafter she was more amazed to realize that the desert had won a place in her heart very close indeed to that which had been completely filled by the love of her husband and her baby girl. The desert does that to those who live within it. It is a phenomenon comparable only to the insidious effect of the sea upon those who follow it.

Mrs. Gower was a valuable addition to the social life of

Ryan. Among other accomplishments she sang, and played the piano with the touch of an artist. That piano was to sound a weird dirge of accompaniment to one of the minor tragedies in the history of the community. On a brief visit to Los Angeles, Mr. and Mrs. Gower received a wire from Major Julian Boyd, superintendent of the mine: "Both our houses burned. Everything lost." They hurried back to Death Valley to find all their personal treasures, including rugs, books, pictures and films of Harry Gower's earlier period of South American service with the company, destroyed. In the midst of the ashes was a tangle of wire.

Discussing it with friends who had watched helplessly while the buildings burned, Mrs. Gower was told that the strings of her beloved piano, breaking amid the flames, had seemed to play a wailing requiem to its own destruction. It was the only requiem that the Biddy McCarthy was to hear. No ceremony marked the abandonment of the mine and the moving out of two hundred and fifty employees and their families in 1928. That was business. Business had brought the railroad to this view of Death Valley. Business moved it away when the discovery and opening of larger, more economically workable deposits of rasorite near Kramer in the Mojave desert made it advisable.

Mr. and Mrs. Gower moved with some of the subordinate employees to Death Valley Junction to manage the newly established Amargosa Hotel, and other company interests there. The Biddy McCarthy housing and culinary properties were remodeled to form the Death Valley View Hotel. Tourists were delighted to hear the clerk instruct a bellboy to show them to their rooms "in No. 1 Bunkhouse," "No. 2 Bunkhouse," or "the Hospital."

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## CHAPTER XIX



### LEADFIELD DOES ITS BIT

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DEATH VALLEY's scattered gold, silver, and copper mining excitements had been almost forgotten through nearly twenty passing years. Borax mining in the region had ceased. Death Valley lapsed into the silence of the ages. What next?

Abruptly through the silence came the resounding cry of the *Leadfield Chronicle*. Happy days are here again. Death Valley is awakening from another period of somnolence. Men! Money! Mines! All the rip-snortin', highfalutin, hell-bendin' life of the booming mining camp is to be revived.

I confess to a weakness for mining camp journalism. No responsible, cautious, dignified metropolitan press can reflect that phase of American life with half the accuracy of the raucous newspapers which attended it. There will never be such journalism in the United States again, as there will never be such sources of inspiration. The Securities Exchange Commission, the Corrupt Practices Act, and allied agencies and laws, have ended that.

The *Leadfield Chronicle*, published near the top of the Grapevine Mountains, just where Titus Canyon begins its steep and winding descent into Death Valley, is the final bonafide example of that journalism that this country is likely to know. Witness Vol. I, No. 2, published at Leadfield, Inyo County, California, March 22, 1926. Price 10c.



## "3,000 ATTEND UNIQUE CELEBRATION AT LEADFIELD

TONNAGE OF ORE FROM NEW CALIFORNIA DISTRICT  
WILL BE LARGE. CROWDS OF SOUTHERN  
NEVADANS GATHER WITH ANGEL  
CITY PEOPLE FOR GREAT  
TIME

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"SPECIAL TRAIN FROM LOS ANGELES ARRIVES. VISITORS  
ARE CARRIED TO LEADFIELD IN 94 AUTOMOBILES.

BEATTY HAS A WILD NIGHT. MANY 'DESERT  
RATS' IN PARTY ON JULIAN SPECIAL.

"The Julian special train from Los Angeles—twelve Pullmans, two diners, and a baggage car, pulled into the Tonopah & Tidewater station at Beatty at 8:30 Sunday morning. It carried 340 passengers including twenty-four women. The 340 had been selected as the first to see Leadfield out of 1,500 who had asked to make the trip. . . . The pretty little town of Beatty made an ideal setting for the scene as the fifteen cars amid the din of hundreds of automobile horns came in from the south. . . .

"Tonopah and Goldfield sent 830 to the celebration. . . . The autos hurried through Beatty, past Rhyolite and Bullfrog, then up the grade toward the Grapevine range. . . . To the Californians the new road was a wonder. . . .

"The road as it stands today approaching both sides of the summit is cut from mountain sides of hard rock, but it is a good road from which all the roughness and danger has been removed. At some places along the road there is a sheer drop into the valley immediately below, and, the sunshine in this valley, the blackness of deep canyons distant in the Grapevines, the blue of the Panamints across Death Valley, and the snow covered tips of the Sierras make a view of stirring mountain scenery.

"Those who know E. S. Giles of Goldfield who surveyed the road complimented his skill.

"From the summit the cars dropped rapidly down the western side of the Grapevines to the noise of squealing brakes and, as Leadfield came in sight, to the booming of dynamite in the hills surrounding the town. . . .

"They milled around a bit and hoisted Julian on their shoulders, cheered for him repeatedly, had their pictures taken by a moving picture camera, and then began to eat.

"The dinner had been prepared by Oscar Olsen, formerly steward in the Elks' Club at Goldfield, and now proprietor of Ole's Inn at Leadfield. . . . At 1:30 Olsen said 1,120 persons had been served. . . . He provided a delicious meal of turkey, pork, beer, salad and all the trimmings so dear to the heart of a chef and so dear to the hearts of city people after a long ride on the desert and mountains. A six-piece Negro orchestra brought by Julian from Los Angeles played jazzy music and sang during the dinner.

"Lieutenant Governor Maurice Sullivan said: 'Really I am afraid to make a speech in California for I'm afraid the Corporation Commission will have me indicted for talking out of my jurisdiction. . . . As a representative of the Nevada State Administration I welcome Mr. Julian. . . . Mr. Julian is a booster, and I myself am a booster. I went through the Goldfield gold rush. . . . I want to say that Mr. Julian is a sport and I greet him as a near neighbor, and we want him in our state.' (Cheers.)

"Julian was then asked for a speech. A man of sharp facial features, thin, wiry and keen, he is witty and an enthusiast. In general appearance he is a typical big-city business man.

"'I want you all—my partners—I want you to stand up and voice your sentiments for Mr. Sullivan, Lieutenant Governor of Nevada. (Cheers.) . . .

"'I didn't bring you here to buy Western Lead. If you don't buy it I will be better satisfied. No fooling. It will be all right with me if you don't. This baby stands

on her own feet. I want you to feel you are all one big family—a happy family. I have a few dollars, enough to care for you all.

“Talking about a wildcat state—next to the State of California, and God knows I love her; I bless her when I get up and kiss her when I go to bed at night—next to California, I love Nevada. But if there were only two states in the union and I wanted to find a free man's state—Nevada.”

“The third and last speaker was Letson Balliet, Tonopah mining engineer:

“... Now Julian has been knocking persistently at your door to make your fortune. Some are knocking Julian, particularly the Corporation Commission of California, but he has been able to surmount obstacles. . . . Mr. Julian, I want to say that Nevada is with you, and to you people, don't overlook the knocking at your door. . . .

“After dinner while a Tonopah orchestra played for dancing—amid blasts in the hills—on a large open-air floor, most of the visitors went to the main or lower tunnel of the Western Lead and the tunnel being started by the New Road Company.

“John Salsberry who is one of the men who sold the claims to the Western Lead explained the work being done and what is planned, including the construction of a concentrator. It was said by bosses of the Western Lead that the company had on the way to Leadfield \$55,000 worth of machinery. Part of the Diesel engine was at the roadside near the summit.”

“Beatty.—It is estimated that 3,000 people were crowded into the little town which until the magic of Julian and Leadfield appeared was a sleepy place.

“About four o'clock this morning she was a hummer. A Tonopah man said, ‘The dance lasted until 3:30 and after that we fought. I lost my cap but have a good hat. I don't know where my overcoat is but I don't need one here anyway. My automobile? Oh, I don't know where that is.’

"Preparations are being made for a forty-room hotel with baths for Leadfield."

And so it went, but not for long. There were all the trimmings of a successful mining camp except sufficient ore, and outside money.

Leadfield sounded what seems to have been Death Valley's last gasp as a mining district on any impressive promotional scale. C. C. Julian's reputation as a promoter was already under fire in California in connection with oil enterprises. Leadfield failed to pull him out of those difficulties. Neither could he maintain Leadfield's initial boom. Together they sank into oblivion, with only a faint echo of the boom when Julian committed suicide in China.

Despite the fact that the site was less than twenty miles from the railroad at Beatty, the promotion of the camp was handicapped by one of the most difficult transportation problems attendant upon any mining excitement in Death Valley since Panamint City, fifty years earlier. The first supplies for the town had to be freighted all the way from Beatty through Daylight Pass to the floor of Death Valley, up to the narrow mouth of Titus Canyon, and up the gorge of Titus, a journey of seventy miles to cover an airline distance of twenty.

Of course, as soon as Julian's promotional talents entered into it, Leadfield boomed. A direct road was built from Beatty, as noted in the *Chronicle* recording of accomplishments. Soon the hotel was built. But instead of forty rooms, its accommodations, judging from the interior of its present ruins, were nearer four. Some of Beatty's good people, including our friend Cy Johnson, and his daughter, Mrs. W. H. Brown, whose racing burro had brought thrills to Rhyolite twenty years earlier, opened stores in Leadfield on the strength of the ballyhoo, and lost most of the money they invested.

The real boom began with Julian's special train and incidental fanfare. Five months later there were enough persons actually living in Leadfield to induce the post office department to establish regular service there. Virginia Thomas Costello was the first and only postmaster that Leadfield ever had.

"I opened the office on August 25, 1926, with mail in the racks for two hundred persons," she tells me. "Five months later only one person called for mail. That was January 15, 1927. That was the day the post office closed."

That was the period of Leadfield's life and death. Though only thirteen years in the past, it is a sadder ghost town than Skidoo, more depressing than completely obliterated Greenwater. Only its location, near the head of Titus Canyon, one of Death Valley's most spectacular features, makes it well worth the half-day's travel required for a visit from any of the hotels or camps.

Titus Canyon merits inspection in its own right. Some miles of its winding gorge suggest the Grand Canyon of the Colorado in miniature, with walls so close that they can almost be touched from either side of an automobile. The National Park authorities by judicious use of CCC labor have made it safe for one-way traffic. That one-way restriction was an intelligent precaution. Many of those winding miles of stone and gravel road are so narrow that two cars could not pass each other.

One must travel down, never up, Titus Canyon. And that means one must go first to a turn-off near Beatty, where the first spectacular rush to Leadfield started. It is roughly, very roughly, thirty-five miles from Beatty to the floor of Death Valley by way of Titus Canyon. The shortest time in which one should hope to make it is two hours. Better figure on three. And don't try it in summer.

It isn't so hot up there at an altitude of five thousand feet in

the Grapevines where Titus Canyon starts its winding drop into Death Valley, but the differences in temperature between peak and valley, the peculiarity of geological formations, and varying meteorological phenomena can do strange things in Titus Canyon. As you enter the lower reaches of the canyon you can understand why you should not make the trip in the summer. That mud, smeared and dried twenty feet high on the cliffs beside you, was deposited there by the receding flood of the last cloudburst. Titus Canyon is addicted to cloudbursts—in summer. Of course most of the other canyons in the Death Valley region have them too, but there is a chance to climb out of the path of the waters in most of them. Not in Titus. Just look up at that dried mud, and estimate your chances. Visualize what this fair road under your wheels must be like after the passing of such a flood. It is gouged twenty feet deep in spots and buried under twenty feet of boulders in other spots.

If the Titus Canyon road is open when you visit Death Valley—except in summer—you will find it worth while to travel. It might never be open again. After all, there is a limit to what CCC boys can do in making a roadway passable to tourists. It took two or three years for them to clear this road after the last cloudburst. I would not blame them if they didn't do it after the next. I doubt if anyone has ever lived to describe a cloudburst in Titus Canyon. One can only see its results.

They are bad enough in the gentler canyons, such as Furnace Creek wash. Johnny Mills is one man easily found in Death Valley who can tell you about a cloudburst in Furnace Creek wash. Johnny was driving a twelve-mule team with wagon and trailer, through Furnace Creek wash one August afternoon when the sky darkened about him. Johnny had been prowling around Death Valley for nearly half a century. He knew what a pitch-black sky meant in an August after-

noon. He whipped up his team to find a side canyon into which he might turn. The sound of torrential waters, and rolling, grinding, boulders came down the canyon upon him.

The twelve mules heard it also. They knew instinctively what Johnny knew through years of experience. They were at a dead run now, with the wagons careening wildly. Johnny stole a glance back over his shoulder and saw a three-foot wall of water, mud, and rolling rocks sweeping toward him, at three times the speed his frantic mules could make. He laid on the long whip, and saw ahead an upward sloping side-draw opening like a rocky road to Paradise. He managed to swing the team into it at a run, and felt the rear end of the trail wagon lurch as the waters struck. But the outfit was clear.

"Were you scared, Johnny?"

"I didn't have time to be scared. I had plenty of time to be mad, though. It took me three hours to unhook the mules and drag the trail and then the lead wagon back into the wash, and couple 'em up again, and hook up the team, and get going. There wasn't any more road for the rest of the way. And that was August. You don't know what Death Valley is like in August."

Johnny Mills knows. He tilts his chair back on one of the deserted verandas of Death Valley View Hotel in summer and gazes out with sun-faded eyes across the shimmering surface of the ground afire. He sits there through the short, flaming sunsets, and watches the mountains change from rose to royal purple, while the desert lifts itself up to meet a sky so filled with stars that there seems to be little space for the sparkling blue through which they shine. In autumn he moves down with the cooler weather to a chair tilted at the same angle on the terrace of Furnace Creek Inn, with the same view more closely before him. In the evening he occupies a comfortable seat in the warm and spacious luxury of the Inn's lobby. He relives and retells a hundred stirring tales of Death

Valley, and is always ready to guide you to the spot where the body, or the gold, was found. It is a great satisfaction to meet Johnny Mills, and to know that so delightful an old-timer, who has given most of a long life to Death Valley, is being so honestly rewarded. Death Valley's moods are not always so dependable.

Cloudbursts in the mountains surrounding Death Valley come with the abruptness of a paper bagful of water slit with a knife over the kitchen sink. A difference is that this meteorological bag, slit upon a mountain top, releases an incalculable amount of water, and the drains into the valley are hardly large enough to carry it.

Comparatively few persons have witnessed the phenomena, because comparatively few persons are moving around Death Valley in the summer season. A few rangers in recent years have escaped the torrents by frantic climbing, and have even snapped photographs of the swiftly passing flood, but the water is so filled with mud and rubble that in still shots it is hardly distinguishable from the ordinary rocky bed of a canyon. Only a motion picture could do justice to the scene. And when the cloudbursts strike, the light is bad for camera work. There is never sufficient warning to prepare for motion picture work. A whole season, two or three seasons, may pass without a cloudburst.

But when they do come they are memorable. That they have been striking through a million years is evident in the vast fans of alluvial detritus which spread from the narrow mouth of every major canyon in the Black, the Funeral, the Grapevine and the Panamint mountains, a mile, two, three miles out upon the floor of Death Valley.

Cloudbursts are a feature of Death Valley's varied charms which tourists should be happier to hear about than to see. Titus Canyon perhaps reveals the most impressive evidence of their power and magnitude.



Tragedy gave it its name. The detritus swept down its narrow defiles by cloudbursts buried the proof of that tragedy for years. The making of the tragedy began on a summer day in 1906, near the height of the Rhyolite boom. Morris Titus, a young mining engineer from Pennsylvania, John Mullan, an eccentric desert character, and a third man named Weller, set out from Rhyolite on a prospecting tour with a long string of burros, a large supply of water, and, incidentally, a shotgun which Titus had borrowed from Jack Longstreet, the old rough-and-ready who was then living at Rhyolite with his horse-shoeing squaw Fanny.

The spring at which they hoped to replenish their water the first night out was dry. They entered a precipitous narrow canyon through a steep side draw and moved down toward Death Valley. They still had a few gallons of water in canteens, but not enough to supply their numerous burros and themselves. A slowly dripping spring gave them slight hope, but after holding a tin cup for an hour to catch a single swallow of water, that hope faded. Titus, unfamiliar with the desert, set out down the canyon with some of the burros. When he failed to return, Weller started down with the remaining burros. Mullan clung to the life-preserving drip of water. But a swallow of water every hour is not enough to preserve life in that region at that time of year. Thirty-six hours convinced Mullan of that fact. His comrades evidently had failed to find water down the canyon. He decided to go the other way.

Somewhere above the site of what was, briefly, to be Leadfield, he was found by other prospectors. No longer able to walk, he was muttering in delirium something about "the spirit of my aged mother."

E. S. Giles of Goldfield who was to survey the Leadfield road from Beatty over that mountainous terrain told me of that. He knew Mullan. "I don't believe he was ever right

after that," he says. "He became a miser. Lived on bacon and potatoes, and as time went on he cut the ration of bacon and increased the potatoes. His chief recreation seemed to be reading mail-order catalogues. He was always talking about getting things by 'postal parce.'"

Titus came of a well-to-do family, and was known to have had considerable money in the form of twenty-dollar gold pieces on his person when he left Rhyolite. His family demanded a search. When it proved fruitless, eastern newspapers, completely ignorant of the natural perils of the country in which he had vanished, suggested that he had been murdered for his gold. The general publicity was sufficient to give the name of Titus Canyon to the scene of his disappearance. In the meantime another cloudburst had swept down that gorge.

It was ten years later that Judge Joe O'Brien, U. S. Commissioner for the Bullfrog district of Nevada, examining some claims near a *tenaja* in the canyon, found a broken gunstock in a litter of rock and brush. An Indian in the party identified it as a part of Jack Longstreet's gun. The men began to dig. At a depth of three feet they found a frayed scrap of a money-belt and three twenty-dollar gold pieces. That was all. Titus Canyon had committed its own murder and buried its victim. Judge O'Brien still has the gunstock.

Titus Canyon has released only a hint of its possibilities.

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## CHAPTER XX



### CIVILIZATION MOVES ON

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**W**OMEN played a comparatively small part in the history of Death Valley from 1849 to 1915. With the exception of Indian women, indigenous as its rocks, the feminine population was most notable for its absence. Death Valley was distinctly a man's country.

After the passing of the heroic Mrs. Brier, Mrs. Bennett, Mrs. Arcane and the few others who attained less fame in the annals of the 'Forty-Niners, white women were content to ignore the valley's questionable delights. Of course Martha Camp and her women in waiting contributed a spot of color to Panamint City in 1874. The eminently respectable Miss Delia Donoghue operated a restaurant there. Doubtless some of the wage-earning miners and business men installed their wives in Panamint for a brief period. But their influence was negligible.

The first woman who exerted a definite influence upon the history of the region was Rosie Winters. It was eighteen years after Rosie's brief appearance in the story that Mrs. Jimmie Dayton arrived at and departed from Furnace Creek Ranch.

The recorded names of so few women in more than half a century of Death Valley history while thousands of men were involved, suggest their minor importance. Of course there were others, but too large a proportion of them were engaged

in the profession of Martha Camp and Tiger Lil to aid materially in the advance of civilization. They were a part of the frontier. When the frontiers were swept away, most of the Tiger Lilies vanished with them. Death Valley became respectable as it became more and more accessible. Feminine influence revealed itself upon a higher plane.

So, in the cause of education, came Miss Bess Davis, to find Mrs. Fred Corkill and Mrs. Ray Ferguson already building up the morale of Death Valley Junction. So came Mrs. Harry Gower to the camp of Ryan. So, a little later, came Helene Eichbaum to the opposite gateway of the valley. Mrs. Eichbaum and her husband came with a definite plan to make Death Valley more attractive to outsiders who had never experienced its charms. She was a constructive, frontier-ending pioneer of far more personal effect than the heroic women of the 'Forty-Niners.

As Helene Neeper, she had come from Indiana to California better equipped for social success than for pioneering. When H. W. (Bob) Eichbaum, a young mining engineer, graduate of the University of West Virginia, met her it did not take him long to realize that she was the girl he wanted to marry. Bob Eichbaum had been lured to the desert by the gold excitement of 1905-7. He built the first electric light plant in Rhyolite.

He loved the desert. He also loved Helene Neeper. It seemed to him that the two loves were complementary. He demonstrated that he was right. He introduced his wife to Death Valley. Despite its contrast with her girlhood home or her home as a bride in Venice, California, and Catalina—or perhaps because of that contrast—she fell as deeply in love with Death Valley as her husband. They established themselves in a tent upon a site where they planned to build a home, a camp, a restaurant, with hotel accommodations which would serve the double purpose of giving them occupation,

income, a reason for living in that desolate spot, and at the same time give to others a chance to share their enjoyment.

The site of their first tent was on the west side of the valley, below the mouth of Emigrant Canyon, upon the vast alluvial fan over which the emigrant Jayhawkers had plodded in 1849. A mile or so behind it was one of the most interesting formations in all Death Valley—Mosaic Canyon. Two or three miles below stretched the wide flat acres of the Devil's Cornfield where the wind drifts sand around the heavy tufts of arrow weed, and that hardy Death Valley shrub struggles upward to new heights, resulting in a formation which is guaranteed to make any rural resident of Iowa or Illinois or Indiana homesick upon a moonlit night. Its resemblance to the scene pictured in John McCutcheon's famous cartoon of Indian Summer is uncanny. And a little way to the north and west are the clean, wind-rippled slopes of Death Valley's sand dunes, ever changing, ever the same. Contrary to a wide-spread popular belief, Death Valley's sand dunes cover a comparatively small part of its total area. Only when one sees them through the eye of a camera, or attempts to pass through or over them on foot, do they appear to be utterly without end. Almost their entire expanse can be seen from the veranda of Stovepipe Wells Hotel.

That was what Bob and Helene Eichbaum named their pioneer hostelry. It is several miles away, across the valley, from what was known to the prospectors before them as Stovepipe Well, but it was a name suited to Death Valley, native to Death Valley, and appealing therefore to two intelligent persons who planned to do something for Death Valley.

The site had been selected in part because of its convenience to the valley's western gateway. But at the moment it was a gateway through which the road had not been remarkably improved since the emigrants burned their wagons rather than attempt it. Bob Eichbaum petitioned the Inyo

County Supervisors to improve the road. They declined, with laughter. If anyone wanted to see Death Valley they could travel the T. & T. to a convenient view on the other side.

So Bob Eichbaum obtained a franchise, and mules and men and dynamite, and created out of rock and sweat a way passable for automobiles from Darwin into the valley. For some years it was known and operated as the Eichbaum Toll Road. It opened Death Valley to safe and reasonably comfortable travel from the west. When the first tourists arrived over that road Helene Eichbaum was prepared to welcome them with excellent food, clean rooms, comfortable cabins.

Mrs. Eichbaum had become well acquainted with the prospectors during the construction period. She sent out invitations to all the old-timers within a hundred miles to be her guests at the formal opening on Thanksgiving Day, 1926.

They crowded in. John Cyte, sometimes known as Johnny-behind-the-gun, trekked across Death Valley from his cinnabar mine at Chloride Cliffs. Shorty Harris punched his jackasses up from Ballarat. Bill Corcoran, who had sold his National Bank Mine at Rhyolite many years earlier for \$20,000 cash, came down from Emigrant wash with his partner Jack Stewart. Ed McSpearin and Sam Ball came in from Wildrose Canyon. Sam Adams, who still thought he could dig some gold out of the Skidoo district, answered the call. Others less famous in the pick-shovel-burro tall tales of Death Valley, but equally hungry, arrived to do justice to the day and the deed.

Mrs. Eichbaum welcomed them all by name. Turkey, salads, sea foods and ice cream completed their delight. It was to be the last as it was the greatest of such delights for many of them. Some were old men. All were tough and hardy. But the desert which had sustained them was to enfold them in final obscurity within the next few years.

When the Inyo County Supervisors noted the increasing

traffic into Death Valley and realized that they had been neglecting an important source of income from potential tourists, they paid the Eichbaums a fraction of what had been expended on the toll road, and built a county road. After Bob Eichbaum's death Mrs. Eichbaum carried on until she was able to sell the greatly improved and expanded property. Stovepipe Wells Hotel carries on, though under different management. It has helped to make Death Valley a pleasant experience for innumerable travelers through the recent years. Helene Eichbaum brought the woman's touch into the ground afire in most practical pioneering fashion.

Soon after Helene Eichbaum, another woman of distinction was finding opportunity to introduce civilization at a high level of luxury in Death Valley. Miss Katherine Ronan, a native daughter of the Golden West, long familiar with Death Valley through family connections which had contributed notably to its history, herself a teacher, lawyer, and for a time acting Judge of the Juvenile Court in Los Angeles, was appointed to the management of the experimental unit of Furnace Creek Inn. As the Inn grew in size, and variety of attractions through another decade, Miss Ronan lived up to her responsibility. She still does. She knows and loves Death Valley, in its harshness as well as its beauty and subtle charm.

With all its luxury of shaded verandas, sun-drenched terraces, tiled swimming pool, inviting chairs behind wide plate-glass windows looking out across the valley floor to the mile-high lift of the Panamints, rosy in the dawn, deep blue in the dusk, Furnace Creek Inn might have been made incongruous. It is not. It stretches along the top of the great alluvial fan at the mouth of Furnace Creek wash as gracefully and naturally as a mountain lion at a desert spring or a golden Cocker Spaniel upon a blue-gray rug.

Of course Miss Ronan does not claim the credit. That

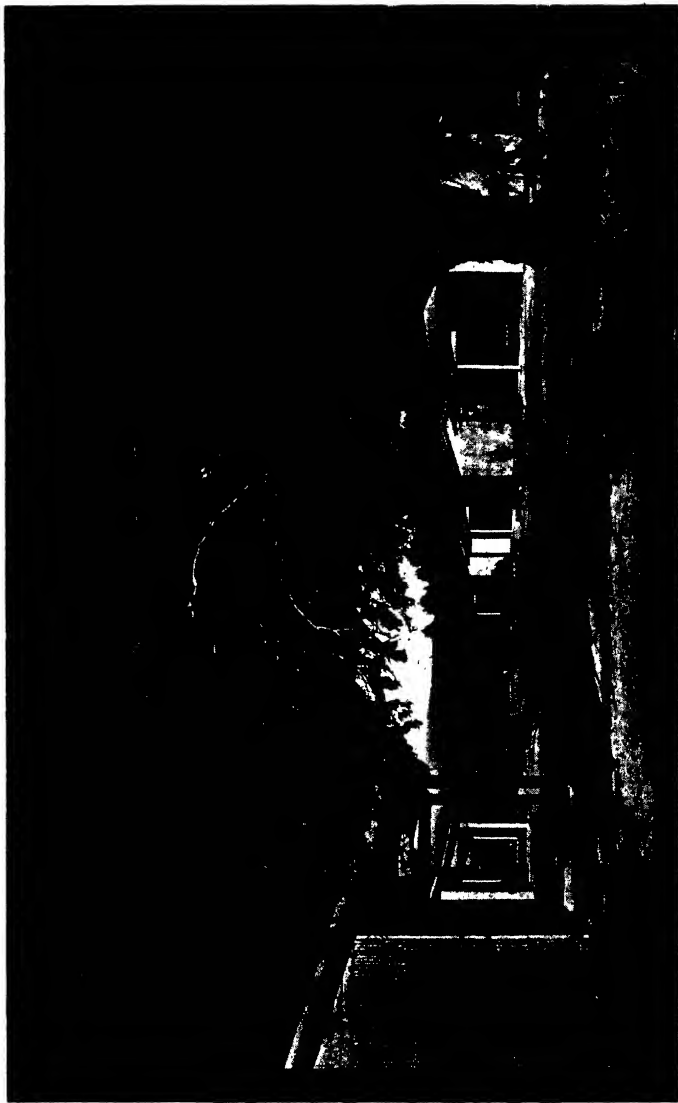


*Courtesy Death Valley Hotel Company.*

Furnace Creek Inn rests at the base of the Funeral Mountains, and the top of the vast alluvial fan which extends from the mouth of Furnace Creek wash to Furnace Creek Ranch, a mile away on the valley's floor. The distant mountains at the right are the Black Mountains. Furnace

Creek wash, not distinguishable in this photograph, divides the two ranges.





*Courtesy Death Valley Hotel Company.*

A street of hotel-room cabins at Furnace Creek Ranch.

has been the work of architects with an understanding and appreciation of desert and mountain contours and hues. It has been the work of such artists in stone as Steve Esteves, loving the colorful rocks of Death Valley even while they cursed them for stubbornness, and selected and twisted and turned them to fit into the picture.

So far as I know, Miss Ronan does not claim credit for anything. She simply does her work, and that work is primarily to furnish luxury without formality or incongruity amid the bold beauties of Death Valley. It is quite a trick, involving among other things the selection and management of a staff ranging from maître d'hôtel to bellhops. The maître is an accomplished man who is able in Death Valley to provide fresh lobsters as casually as he provides roast turkey or grilled lamb chops and new peas in season. The bellhops have clean hands, not too much in evidence, and a sense of humor, leavening their respectful sense of responsibility. Witness an incident recently recited by my friend Inyokel, familiar with all the variety of Death Valley attractions. Inyokel was describing the crowding of visitors into Death Valley for the Easter sunrise services which are a feature of its life.

Stovépipe Wells Hotel was so full, he writes, that Manager Bennett was forced to put mattresses on the barroom floor for two elderly spinsters who submitted to that indignity only as the alternative to rolling in blankets on the sand dunes. "And up at Furnace Creek Inn," he adds, "they rented the room used as a clinic by Dr. Shrum to a man and his wife who had no other accommodations. Said the gentleman to Bellhop Don Colley as they paused by the 'Hospital' sign to open the door, 'This is a hell of a place to park a couple of Christian Scientists!'"

With such small personal touches, any feeling of incongruity in the luxury of the Inn within the starkness of Death

Valley is eliminated. It honors its environment. Within and without, it fits the scene as well as does Furnace Creek Ranch, which has been the chief oasis on the valley floor ever since Bellerin' Teck decided seventy years ago that he could grow alfalfa there. Furnace Creek Ranch shelters a larger number of guests, with a greater variety of accommodations at lower rates, but the same spirit of contentment, devoid of formality, bred of the desert, is evident in both.

The Pacific Coast Borax Company started to build the Inn after it ceased mining operations at Ryan. It has been extending and improving the work steadily through the years. In the same period it has improved the original settlement of Death Valley Junction into a gate-house worthy of the scene.

There, where Bess Davis gazed hopelessly at Bob Tubbs' uninviting cabins in 1915, the wide expanse of the Amargosa Hotel, with a pillared veranda three hundred feet long, now welcomes throngs of visitors intent upon Death Valley. The Amargosa Hotel is as distinctive as the other hotels and camps of the Death Valley region. Its location, at an altitude of two thousand feet above the floor of Death Valley, near the upper portal of the valley's main eastern highway, is responsible for a variety of climate ranging from spectacular snow scenes in winter to glimmering heat in summer. Mrs. Harry Gower, I believe, is responsible for the charm of its service to weary desert travelers.

There is a friendly ease, not often found in commercial hotels, pervading the comfortable lobby of the Amargosa with its warm open fire, its convenient newspapers and magazines, its corner for Chinese checkers, and the bridge table which Earl hops to set up at a nod. Its atmosphere is a bit reminiscent of the boardinghouse days which gave it birth. Wayfarers from Long Island, coming in stiffly, perhaps after a two-hundred-mile drive from Reno in one afternoon, are guided with proper consideration to their rooms and baths by the

versatile Earl. Half an hour later they sail majestically across the lobby to the dining room where they gather more comfort than they ever suspected any dinner could contain. By the time they re-enter the lobby their attitude toward life and their fellow men is undergoing a strange and subtle alteration.

Presently they find themselves exchanging confidences on the condition of the highways with a couple from Dubuque whom they might have looked upon with condescension when they passed through that lobby an hour earlier. From the Reno-Las Vegas highway the conversation moves into Death Valley. They are delighted to be assured that the main roads are now all open, smoothly surfaced, leading to scenic marvels. Mr. Long Island doubts that he will be interested in unadorned rocks, but when one's wife wants to try roughing it for a couple of days what can a man do. Mr. Dubuque agrees. They are just going to make a quick trip across the valley. It means only one extra night on the road to Los Angeles, and they've heard so much about Death Valley they thought they would see for themselves.

"Good idea. We thought we would take a look at Scotty's Castle."

"Oh, yes; Scotty's Castle! Yes, they tell me that's worth seeing. They say it cost three million dollars."

"Well, when you get up into those figures, I pass. I run a grain elevator."

"Hal I'm in transportation—trucking. New York and Boston. Walter H. Adams."

"My name is Henry Williams. You're just the man I wanted to meet. Maybe you can tell me the ton-mile operating costs of these big diesel trucks."

And so it goes. Mrs. Williams digs her knitting out of an ornate bag and goes contentedly to work. Mrs. Adams moves her chair a little so that she can kibitz a bridge game,

and to her astonishment finds herself exchanging a knowing smile with the bellboy who is getting himself an eyeful of what the Amargosa Hotel knows as the Oswald System of contract bridge. The Amargosa has its little family jokes, and permits visitors to enjoy them.

There is peace and comfort and contentment, flavored with smiles, in this lobby of Death Valley. Most of these people are busy people. They are tired enough to relax and to enjoy their comfort. The tourists are weary with travel. The residents are relaxing after their day's work.

Dr. Shrum may be called back to his neat little hospital in a wing of this building in a few minutes to set the broken shoulder of a young woman whose car failed to make the turn in the highway below the junction. The young man who is substituting for the night clerk must be bright and early at his regular job of managing the community store. Harry Gower, slender, gray-haired, level-eyed, a little reticent, a little tired until he overhears a joke or catches the eye of his wife, has just driven in, three hundred miles from Los Angeles by way of Baker, and must drive out at dawn to settle a few problems having to do with the date orchard which he planted at Furnace Creek Ranch. He carries a variety of responsibilities. He is resident general manager of most of the borax company's business in the Death Valley region. Mrs. Gower sees to it that the Amargosa Hotel is no burden among those responsibilities.

"There must be a community of interests here, a sort of *esprit de corps*, to keep everything moving smoothly," Mrs. Gower explains. "Finding and keeping satisfactory help so far out in the desert was a problem in the earlier days. The younger people were dissatisfied because of lack of entertainment. Married couples proved more dependable. When a wife is employed in the hotel, for example, and her husband is earning good wages in the garage or elsewhere, and they

have a youngster or two in school, they become a substantial and contented part of the community. They understand our problems. They fit into our democracy. They cheerfully do odd jobs which are not strictly in the line of their duties. A clerk is willing to repair a doorknob or a cook to wash pots in an emergency."

Mrs. Gower herself cheerfully dusts the piano in the lobby when the housekeeper is occupied elsewhere, or with the poise of a versatile woman plays the piano and sings a charming, brooding, Death Valley song of her own composition. With equal ease she joins strapping big "Brownie," W. H. Brown, deputy sheriff, office assistant to W. W. Cahill, in duet for wedding, funeral, or holiday program. There is real democracy in Death Valley Junction, and the transient guests of Amargosa Hotel are quickly charmed with its spirit, subtly prepared to enjoy the peace of the desert.

Not that life there is all peace, even now. But there seems to be a touch of comic relief even in the incidents of dramatic possibility. Not long ago, for example, Deputy Sheriff Brown was hastily summoned to Shoshone, thirty miles south of Death Valley Junction, to exert his authority for the pacification of Rosie Weed, who was celebrating her discovery of a quart of whisky by throwing rocks at her Indian neighbors in the mesquite thickets of Shoshone.

Rosie had recently served two years in San Quentin for horse stealing. Brownie made the arrest, and, aware of Rosie's reputation, slipped a pair of handcuffs on her before he loaded her into the back of his car and started for Independence, 190 miles away, across Death Valley and three ranges of mountains. Halfway down Furnace Creek wash, Brownie was stopped by engine trouble.

He noted that Rosie was sound asleep in the back seat. He climbed out of the car to tinker with the engine. Half an hour elapsed before the difficulty had been overcome.

Brownie heaved a sigh of relief and glanced again at the back seat. Rosie had vanished. The deputy sheriff searched the wash and small contributing canyons for an hour, and finally drove on to Furnace Creek Ranch. At the ranch he reported by telephone that Rosie had escaped, and then went to breakfast with a friend. At breakfast he heard the party-line signal for his own home in Death Valley Junction. He reached the 'phone and heard a voice announce to Mrs. Brown: "Brownie's squaw is down here in a ditch below Furnace Creek."

Not even pausing to adjust his wife's reaction to the statement, Brownie hastened out and picked up Rosie. She had walked nine miles through the darkness with her hands locked in steel. Her wrists were swollen until the steel bracelets were hidden in the flesh. She was sobering, and vicious. She screamed curses and tried to kick Brownie in the shins. He bundled her efficiently into the rear seat, and explained that he would bash her over the head with a tire iron if she did not subside. She understood that sort of talk. At the county seat she was sent to jail for six months.

But Rosie was a free spirit. Shortly after her release from the county jail she demonstrated by carving another Indian at Pahrump. Pahrump was over the Nevada line, out of Brownie's jurisdiction, but the peace officers of those wide stretches of desert are willing to save each other a long drive when possible. The sheriff at Tonopah, 150 miles away, asked Brownie to investigate. Brownie took Dr. Shrum with him and motored to Pahrump. In the brush of the Indian settlement there he found the victim, with most of his innards outside. Dr. Shrum tucked them in and sewed them up as efficiently as possible in the circumstances, and Brownie went to look for the assailant. He found Rosie. He knew Rosie. He promptly suspected Rosie.

Much to his astonishment, for Indians seldom confess, and seldom squeal, Rosie admitted the knife work.

It was an operation, Rosie explained, blandly. The man had been poisoned, in agony, bloated, after eating canned fish. Rosie had punctured bloated cattle, sometimes with excellent results, in the course of her varied career. Out of the kindness of her heart she decided to perform a similar operation to relieve this man of his agony.

Brownie had no authority to make an arrest in Nevada. But he induced Rosie to go with him to minister to the wounded man on the long drive to Tonopah. They reached Tonopah with the victim still alive, and placed him in the hospital. He died two hours later. The Tonopah sheriff then locked up Rosie. She is now serving fourteen years in the Nevada penitentiary at Carson. Her friends and kin around Shoshone, Pahrump and Furnace Creek are hoping, with some reason, that she will get no time off for good behavior.

It seems that banditry in the old style is a thing of the past in Death Valley. The last real excitement along that line came one drizzly morning when Jimmy Gill, who lived at the Junction and had a job in Furnace Creek wash, started at daybreak to make the drive. A mile or two out from the Junction he was amazed to see two wild geese waddling drunkenly on the oiled road. He assumed, probably with accuracy, that the migrating geese had mistaken the wet road for a stream, and had been temporarily stunned by the hard landing. He hurried home and fetched his shotgun, parked his car a quarter of a mile from the geese, and crawled along the ditch. When he was almost within shot he heard another car coming from the Junction. Realizing that it would frighten away the geese, he leaped from the ditch, gun in hand, to flag down the car. The driver saw him as a bandit, stepped on the gas, put the geese to flight, and sped on to Furnace Creek Ranch.

Jimmy Gill, thoroughly disgusted, went to his work. The travelers reported that they had been held up by an armed



bandit. The report was telephoned back to the Junction. Posses went tearing into Furnace Creek Canyon from both ends, searching the rough wayside as they advanced. Finally they encountered Jimmy, calmly at work, with his gun in his car. He told his story. It was a little difficult to believe that there had been wild geese on the Furnace Creek Highway, but the shamefaced alarmists had the decency to verify that point, and Death Valley's last bandit hunt went down in history.

There is greater variety in the life of Death Valley and its environs now, but the National Park Service frowns upon the use of firearms. The peace of the desert is more likely to be momentarily shattered by a group of gay young things trooping out of Furnace Creek Ranch on horseback than by echoes of the past.

Between the year when Morris Titus carried old Jack Longstreet's notched gun into the chasm which was to be his grave and monument, and the years of easy travel through all its fastnesses, Death Valley was to change not at all. Only man was to build his own monuments to vanity, to pride, to profit, and to entertainment. For example, Scotty's Castle in Grapevine Canyon.

Who shall say that that is not right? Man is a puny animal amid the elemental forces revealed in those riotous mountains. Perhaps by noting contrasts with his own structures he may realize his insignificance more completely, accept his lot more philosophically, and gain a greater inspiration from the Power that created both him and these everlasting hills.

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## CHAPTER XXI



### NATIONAL MONUMENT

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SOME millions of years passed in the building of Death Valley. Its geological formations come nearer to revealing the complete history of the creation of this earth than any other group of mountains and chasms ever available to the inspection of mankind. Some of its rocks are declared by scientists to be twice the age of anything visible in the mile-deep gash of the Grand Canyon of the Colorado. From high in its surrounding ramparts Geologist Donald Curry brings fossils of sea-life in realistic evidence of the passing of eons in creation.

More than half a century after its discovery by white men, it was still a land of death, of hardship, of horror and of mystery. Then, only a quarter of a century more was required to make this vast museum of natural history and scenic thrills safely available to whomsoever may care to study, to enjoy, and to profit from it.

The Tonopah and Tidewater Railroad, and its extension of the Death Valley Narrow Gauge Railroad, opened it to easy access from the East. The Eichbaum Toll Road opened it to modern vehicles from the West. Private enterprise brought Death Valley's unique wonders to the attention of a world that was beginning to use its automobiles more and more widely.

The Pacific Coast Borax Company had a heavy investment there, in the railroad, in the Amargosa Hotel, Death

Valley View Hotel, Furnace Creek Ranch, Furnace Creek Inn, extensive un-mined borax deposits. It built highways to supplement, and eventually to supplant its railroads, and conserve its values. It made Death Valley comfortable, and thereby extended its attractions and maintained its interest. Independently, on the opposite side of the valley the Eichbaums, and after them the Bennetts, were doing a similar work on a less extensive scale. Where few except lone prospectors or workers in the mines had been visiting Death Valley, scores and hundreds drawn by curiosity, love of nature in the rough, and assurance that they could find passable roads, comfortable beds and good food, began to come, to wonder, and to tell the world. I have seen parties from England, France and India meeting in Furnace Creek Inn.

Postcard pictures of the sand dunes, Devil's Cornfield, Devil's Golf Course, Dante's View, Mushroom Rock, began to go back to Kalamazoo and Kankakee, to Washington and Boston. Geologists wrote to their friends in the Colorado School of Mines or the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Others wrote to the Smithsonian Institution or the American Museum of Natural History. Snapshots of family parties at Badwater, lowest point in the United States, or of three kids on a burro at Stovepipe Wells Hotel were exhibited in a trailer camp in Florida or a penthouse in New York.

Inyo County took over the Eichbaum Toll Road, improved it and opened it to free traffic. The road from Baker on the Los Angeles-Salt Lake highway was graded and surfaced through Amargosa Canyon, parallel to the T. & T. tracks. More travelers came, and more photographs and tall tales of Death Valley went back to the women's clubs and local libraries and politicians throughout the nation.

And so, in February, 1933, by Presidential proclamation, Death Valley was made a National Monument. A National Monument of such vast area as Death Valley differs from a

National Park only in a few technical details. Presidential proclamation withdraws the land from further settlement and places it under the control of the Department of the Interior. It is then the duty of the National Park Service "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations."

Such withdrawal of the land from settlement, of course, must leave undisturbed the titles to any property in the area previously established by homesteading or patenting. In the original withdrawal of Death Valley lands, therefore, the title to certain claims in the Skidoo district, the Ashford holdings, various undeveloped ore deposits, other small scattered mining locations, Furnace Creek Ranch, Furnace Creek Inn, Stovepipe Wells Hotel, were unaffected. The accommodations for tourists already being operated by private enterprise could fit in very nicely with the Park Service's duty to conserve the scenery and wild life and provide for its enjoyment.

Nearly everyone having any interest in Death Valley was pleased with that arrangement except Death Valley Scotty. As soon as the surveys were made to define the boundaries of the Death Valley National Monument, Scotty announced bitterly that he had made Death Valley, and the borax company was commercializing it. Of course Scotty does not believe in "commercializing" anything.

Of course it is commercialized. Why shouldn't it be? Why should the verb of commerce so frequently be sounded with contempt? Commerce has opened the world to civilization. It is logical and right that it should help to open our national parks under the control of a department of government sworn to conserve natural attractions and provide for their enjoyment.

Death Valley under National Park Service control has

offered maximum satisfactions with minimum irritations. When the Service entered upon its administration there it accepted Death Valley as of the year 1933, including hotels and camps and roads provided by private capital. For travelers who might prefer something a little more closely akin to the encampments of the first white travelers ever to see the valley, the Park authorities laid out trailer and tent grounds in the sheltered foothills of the Funeral Mountains. As soon as that was done, and the mesquite thickets of Bennett's Well, twenty-five miles to the south, across the valley, were designated as a free campground, the whole range of human accommodations was in effect, practically without cost to the government.

One visitor could broil a steak over an open fire in the precise spot where Manly had smoked the meat for his trail-breaking journey in January, 1850. Another could have filet mignon served at a white-draped table behind plate glass within rifle shot of where the Rev. J. W. Brier had entertained his starving family with a lecture on education, "grave, humorous and reminiscent," on Christmas Eve of 1849.

Death Valley had never been popular as Yosemite, Yellowstone and Glacier parks were popular. But it held within its naked mountains souvenirs of history, the life stories of noteworthy men and women, proofs of accomplishment. It contained color and a starkness of beauty which made it worthy of attention. It became the duty of the Park Service to preserve and vitalize its points of historic interest, to protect its unique wild life, to safeguard the natural growth of its flowers and shrubs.

It was necessary to see that visitors did not practice marksmanship on the points of light reflected from the eyes of the tiny kit foxes frequenting the trails by night, or upon the great curl-horned mountain sheep which had survived a thou-

sand generations of hungry Indians but could hardly survive a decade of trophy-hunting white men. It was necessary to protect the gleaming silver-gray desert holly which is Death Valley's loveliest shrub, from raiders who would tear it up by the roots, decorate their cars, load it into trucks, peddle it in the holiday markets of distant cities.

Beyond that the chief purpose of the Service was to improve and extend the roads farther and farther, so that the American people might have safe and comfortable access to the greatest variety of desert scenery upon this continent.

There was never any need of protecting Death Valley's surrounding mountains, the painted cliffs and crags above its gorges, the vast white brush marks of its floor, the colossal blue-gray fans of gravel extending through thousands of feet from the narrow mouths of a hundred canyons into the flat expanses of salt and soda. Those features could be depended upon to defy the vandal—man—as permanently and safely as the flaming sunsets above them.

Col. John R. White, whose administration of Sequoia National Park had been the conventional one of protecting perishable beauties from hordes of summer vacationists, was appointed to the superintendency of Death Valley National Monument. He handed the direct supervision of the Monument area, four times as large as his own, to T. Ray Goodwin, who had been his assistant in Sequoia Park.

Mr. Goodwin could have looked down from the summit of Mt. Whitney on the eastern edge of Sequoia Park, 14,496 feet above sea level, the highest point in the United States, almost into the pit of Death Valley, 279 feet below sea level. He did not bother to look. He moved. The contrast between Sequoia's towering forests, eternal snows, sparkling streams, meadows decked with summer flowers, and Death Valley's crags and colors could be shocking. It could also be stimulating. Ray Goodwin was stimulated.

One rough tour of the valley's available roads convinced him that this was an area in which the whole previous conception of the National Park Service's duties to the government and to the public must be altered. Private enterprise had already provided a variety of accommodations for tourists. It was willing to continue and expand those accommodations. Private enterprise and Inyo county had built roads into the valley, and to some of the most notable points of scenic and historic interest. The new superintendent inspected it all.

Ray Goodwin would never be suspected of being a sentimentalist. Probably he is not. I do not know. He appears to be rather wiry and tough, the sort of man who will listen while the doctor tells him to go to bed to cure a feverish cold, and then come out into the desert sunshine with a grin after the doctor has departed.

Sentimentalist or not, he fell in love with Death Valley, its history, legends and folklore. That was as it should be. The superintendents of our national parks and monuments should love the wonders which they have been set to guard, and to reveal. Goodwin wanted to make his own thrills available to thousands. So far as he could see—and that was two miles high or two miles deep and one hundred miles away—the most important thing he could do for Death Valley was to provide more and better roads. Rangers to safeguard the visitors, naturalists to study and conserve the flora and fauna, and similar adjuncts of national park life would attend, of course.

That is what has happened under the Park Service regime in Death Valley. Superintendent Goodwin convinced the authorities that the boys of CCC who were cutting trails, building fireplaces, and otherwise contributing alike to their own well-being and the enjoyment of summer visitors in mountain parks could be advantageously employed in Death

Valley while the snow blocked the high forests. At a cost of little more than the oil needed for surfacing and the gasoline to drive machines, they could extend and improve Death Valley roads. They have been doing so for seven years.

The Park Service recognizes and honors the inviolability of Death Valley's fundamental values. Man could hardly mar, if he would, the broad sweep of 350,000 bitter acres below sea level or five times that many acres piled up to heights of more than two miles. The Park Service knows that anything human must remain insignificant in Death Valley.

Man can only prepare a pageant, a record of a few fleeting years of his own accomplishment, to impress his fellow men with an idea that he has conquered these vast spaces. It is a graceful gesture. It pleases the National Park Service, the State of California, the Inyo Associates, and all others who have a part in it or are witnesses to it.

That pageant must be recorded in recognition of the latest phase of the valley's history, although it has left no mark within Tomesha much more permanent than the ashes of its signal fires. It was the ceremony of dedication of the Mt. Whitney-Death Valley Highway. In the pageantry of that celebration the waters of Lake Tularinyo, highest lake in the United States, were mingled with Badwater, far below sea level upon the floor of Death Valley.

The water in a thong-laced gourd was carried as only a century of history compressed into two days could carry it—by Indian runner, Pony Express rider, ox-drawn prairie schooner, horse-drawn stagecoach, prospector and burro, twenty-mule team, steam train, automobile caravan, and finally by airplane, to be poured into the waiting, bitter, crystal-clear pool of Death Valley's lowest pit.

As the waters mingled a fire upon Death Valley's floor signaled up to Dante's view, a mile above. An answering fire blazed to carry the message of accomplishment to the peak of



Telescope, across the valley and another mile nearer to the stars. Another waiting group upon Telescope kindled their beacon in answer and in signal to historic Cerro Gordo, another fifty miles to the west. Cerro Gordo lifted its flame to the watchers upon Mt. Whitney. The pageant was complete.

High speed roads, if one is so far from understanding the spirit of Death Valley as to prefer high speed, are now available from end to end and across the salty floor. Slow speed roads, where there is a turn and a new picture in every fifty feet, are available in a dozen canyons which once were difficult of passage even for a burro.

Watered by the overflow from Dolph Navares' spring in Cow Creek Canyon, the park headquarters village, housing superintendent, assistants, rangers, naturalists, in appropriate bungalows, shielded from the glare by waving tamarisk, nestles in a fold of the foothills a few miles above Furnace Creek Ranch. In a similar setting, between the ranch and the village, the public tourists' camp, complete with piped water, showers and sanitary facilities, is growing its own tamarisk plumes and Death Valley shrubs, propagated and transplanted and encouraged by Botanist M. F. Gilman in the park nursery at the village.

Only the CCC camp buildings are stark and ugly on those slopes. I wish they were not quite so obtrusive. But if Death Valley does not level those barracks in time it will in some other way adapt them to its lines and colors. In the meantime the boys who live there are making Death Valley easier to see.

Early in the summer, usually about the first of May, the boys are assembled in their trucks and carried to camps in higher, cooler, spots where they may do other needed work. A few may be merely transferred to the summer headquarters of the Park Service in Wildrose Canyon, high enough in the Panamints to be comfortable even while Death Valley itself reverts to its Indian title of Tomesha, the ground afire.

Few sensible persons remain within its super-heated

depths through the months of June, July, August and September. A few rangers and other monument employees do so. Caretakers and watchmen at Furnace Creek Ranch, the hotels, and the park headquarters village insist that they do not suffer. Some even assert that they like it. What little work they do is done in the comparative coolness of dawn. Death Valley is even more peaceful in summer than in winter, except when the cloudbursts strike. More and more hardy, if foolish, souls pass through it in the summer months. By dropping down through Daylight Pass, near Beatty, Nevada, on the east, an average car may cross the valley and gain the comparatively cool altitudes of the Panamints on the west within an hour. An average of ten cars a day made that passage in the summer of 1939, in one direction or the other, and Superintendent Goodwin expects more each year as Death Valley's fame extends.

There is hot desert on both sides of the valley. The cars are likely to boil, but usually they get through. If one breaks down, it is advisable to crawl into its shade and wait. A patrol, or another hardy soul will come along. The waiting will not be comfortable, but if one has water, and sticks to the shade without exertion, it can be survived.

Still the human beings who have known Tomesha most intimately through countless generations flee its summer fires. Most of the Indians are resting in the shade of the piñons, high upon the shoulders of Telescope Peak. Beyond Telescope, at the eastern edge of Panamint Valley, Indian George sits in his untidy ranch yard, and looks back upon a hundred years of Death Valley history in which he has played an intermittent part.

His contemporaries, Hungry Bill and Panamint Tom and Old Doc, have gone to their happy hunting grounds. Only George has kept pace with that full century of death and life. He speaks willingly of that long past, but he welcomes any available information about the present.

"Where you come from?" he demands when the interview seems to have fallen into the doldrums.

"Death Valley. All around Death Valley."

"You savvy Beatty?"

"Yes."

"You know about Injun get killed in Beatty?"

It happened that I did. My old friend Judge Ray had told me about the murder. So had Mrs. Al Revert, also a pioneer resident of Beatty. The killing itself had been commonplace and sordid enough, but it had been followed by incidents which lifted it a little out of the ordinary. One local Indian, a quarrelsome, surly, unpopular fellow, had raised his quarrelsomeness and unpopularity to the boiling point with fire-water. At the peak of his spree he had threatened another Indian with a gun and had been liquidated.

The killer went back to his place in the sun. The business of the little town continued in its customary leisurely fashion. The slain man had threatened white men who refused to buy him drink. His abrupt removal from the scene was a cause of congratulation.

But Indians have a peculiar sense of responsibility. Although the family connections of the slain man had been relieved of a definite nuisance by his removal, word went out to some of their men in the surrounding desert, and they began to drift into Beatty to take the conventional action of Indians in such circumstances. The killer became aware of their arrival, and realized its significance.

Promptly he asked to be put in jail. Now the Beatty jail is no longer lynch-proof. Recently a young Indian girl whose father had refused her permission to marry the man of her choice had disappeared from the settlement, as had the man. For several days the Indian families searched the surrounding desert, in vain. Then, quite by chance, someone saw her coming out of the ruined jail. She had never been away from Beatty. Neither had her man. They had simply set up

housekeeping in the jail because they knew no one ever looked in it. It was that sort of jail.

The killer knew all about it. When he surrendered to the deputy sheriff he asked to be put in the Tonopah jail, one hundred miles away, and far better protected against the Indian tradition of family responsibility.

Thus, when George asked for news of the murder I was able to give him this, only a month old. That was snappy service, almost like getting it by short wave direct from the scene of action, complete with sound effects of gunshots and grating rusty hinges. George appreciated it. He realized that he had tuned in on a valuable potential source of up-to-date information.

"You know Hank?" he inquired.

I did not know which Hank he meant, but I did know a man called Hank, and I did not want to disappoint George. "Yes," I said.

"When you see?"

"Three-four weeks ago."

"He live Death Valley."

"Yes."

"Furnace Creek."

"Yes."

"All Injuns, Furnace Creek, sick."

It happened that I was able to corroborate that statement also. There had been a sort of flu epidemic among the Furnace Creek Indians. "Yes," I said. "Plenty sick, three-four weeks ago."

"Hank, he sick?"

"Yes."

"How he now?"

"He's all right." I knew that none of the Indians had died recently.

"Ugh. How many men, Furnace Creek?"

It did not occur to me that George meant literally men;

that his interest was not at all in women and children. "Mebbe thirty-five," I said.

He registered doubt. I guessed at his meaning, and elaborated my statement. "Thirty-five all together," I said. "Mebbe ten men, twenty-five women and children."

He nodded, satisfied. He had all the news he wanted, hot from the holly-sagebrush-greasewood telegraph. "All same, all time," he said.

A great, a profound, philosophical observation from a man who has known Death Valley intimately in all its moods through one hundred years. After that there could be only anti-climax. Conversation lagged.

"Where you go now?" George asked at last.

"I go home. Laguna Beach." It meant nothing to George. "Los Angeles," I tried.

"Oh." He had heard of Los Angeles.

"Where those hairy men went," I added. His interest stirred again. He turned dull eyes upon me.

"Five weeks for them to go to Los Angeles," I said. "I go in five hours."

He threw back his head and laughed, revealing quite a number of teeth, still serviceable. He considered that a joke. Maybe it was. George is a merry soul within his limitations. I handed over the half pack of cigarettes remaining, and stood up.

"I take your picture, George," I said, and stepped back to focus the camera. Without a word George straightened his cap and turned his face toward the sun.

"And that," said My Memory as we drove away, "is a true measure of the only real change in Death Valley in the ninety years since George saw the first white men there. It has simply been made accessible."

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